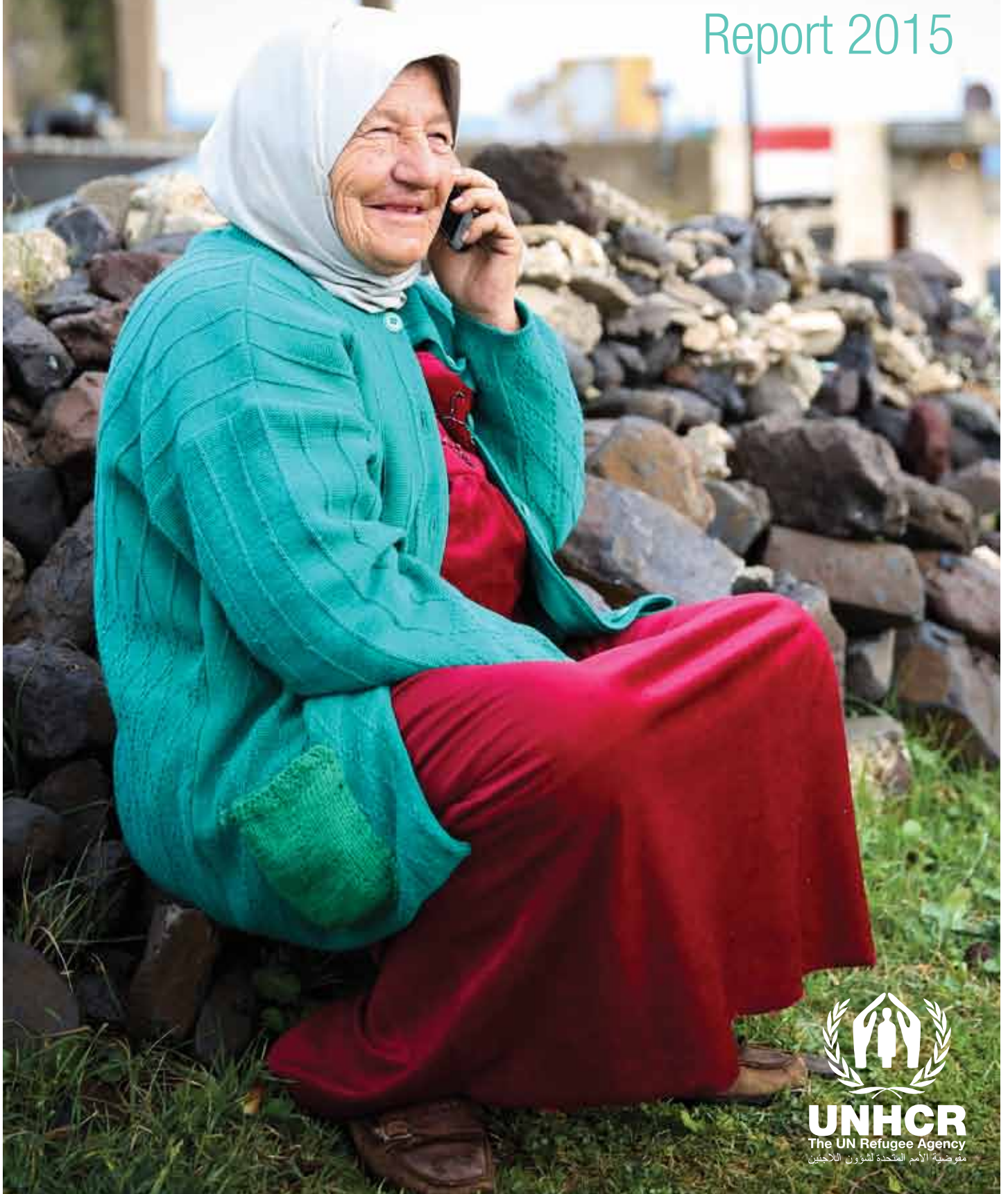


PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING THE DISPLACED IN SYRIA

UNHCR Syria End of Year
Report 2015



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FOREWORD

FROM THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE

I was appointed the UNHCR Representative in Syria in September of last year. Since then, I have travelled around this beautiful country, meeting many people, partners, government, displaced persons, host communities and refugees and I have been both amazed and saddened by their stories.

It is clear that the impact of the conflict in Syria has been far-reaching, as amongst many of the heartbreaking realities I saw, it has resulted in forced displacement, sudden destitution, crumbling infrastructures, and the breakup of families. The protection needs of the Syrian population are massive and UNHCR and partners face huge challenges in terms of access and outreach to meet even their most basic needs. In 2015, UNHCR reached more than 850,000 individuals through protection and community services interventions, including through capacity building of its partners. UNHCR has provided targeted material assistance, socio-economic and recreational activities, psychosocial support, legal aid, gender-based violence referral, child protection services, community based initiatives as well as awareness raising sessions on various issues, ranging from residency procedures to prevention of gender-based violence and early marriages in Syria. The collective efforts of Protection sector partners, which UNHCR coordinates as the sector lead agency, benefited more than 3.5 million internally displaced persons.



We have used -and will continue to use - every avenue available to join partners to reduce vulnerability and provide protection to the most vulnerable people throughout Syria. In 2015, UNHCR supported 30 community centers in 9 governorates, 12 of which were opened during the second half of the year. All interventions of the community centers are designed to focus attention in particular on persons with specific needs with activities such as counseling, education, livelihood, vocational training, primary health and psychosocial support activities. Over 1,000 beneficiaries per month are supported by UNHCR and partners with a variety of protection services through a community center. I personally attended the opening of the first community center in Lattakia and was delighted to see the great work being carried out there; I look forward to seeing many more throughout the country in 2016, also in partnership with UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO, as well as other agencies and local institutions.

Despite the challenging operating conditions, UNHCR continues to also provide other types of humanitarian assistance to those in need throughout Syria. In 2015, UNHCR Syria dispatched over 9 million core relief items to 3.2 million needy individuals in 12 out of the 14 governorates including cross border convoys from Turkey and Jordan, provided cash assistance to some 23,000 families, delivered shelter assistance to more than 60,000 individuals and ensured nearly 800,000 individuals had access to healthcare. In October 2015, due to extremely cold weather, UNHCR started a winterization programme, which targets 750,000 individuals with 150,000 winter kits, including winter clothes, sleeping bags, stoves and high thermal blankets in the winter period.

I was pleased to see that, despite the challenging circumstances, UNHCR through its partners including the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), national and international non-governmental organizations and community-based local organizations reached out to some 5 million individuals, bringing in much needed assistance. I witnessed the resilience, pride, dignity and adaptability of the Syrian people, in particular of those that have lost their homes and have been internally displaced, and the generosity of their hosts.

Much more remains to be done.

As we move into 2016, let us all hope that this beautiful country and its resilient people, will see peace, allowing them to engage in the process of rebuilding their country. We, at UNHCR, stand ready for this and in the meantime will continue to reach out to all those in need with protection and assistance in Syria.

Sajjad Malik
Representative UNHCR Syria

GLOSSARY

ACF	Action Against Hunger	MMR	Measles, Mumps and Rubella
AGDM	Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming	MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
CBI	Community-Based Initiative	MoLA	Ministry of Local Administration
CBO	Community-Based Organization	MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management	NFI	Non Food Item
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CFCC	Children and Family Care Center	NSAG	Non State Armed Group
CFS	Child Friendly Space	PBIED	Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Device
CRI	Core Relief Item	PHC	Primary Health Care
DRC	Danish Refugee Council	PoC	Person of Concern
ERF	Emergency Relief Fund	PSS	Psychological Social Support
GBV	Gender Based Violence	PU	Première Urgence
GOPA	Greek Orthodox Patriarchy and All the East	SARC	Syrian Arab Red Crescent
HQs	Headquarters	SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
HRL	Human Rights Law	SRP	Syria Response Plan
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan	SSSD	Syrian Society for Social Development
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee	UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
ID	Identity Document	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IED	Improvised Explosive Device	UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
IHL	International Humanitarian Law	UNRC/HC	United Nations Resident Coordinator /Humanitarian Coordinator
IMC	International Medical Corps	UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees
INGO	International Non-Government Organization	UNSC	United Nations Security Council
IOM	International Organization of Migration	VBIED	Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Al Sham	WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support	WFP	World Food Programme

TIMELINE 2015



JANUARY

- UNHCR urgently responds to the snowstorm hitting the country by distributing CRIs to over 10,000 individuals in Damascus and Rural Damascus as well as replacing damaged tents in Tartous. Throughout the country during the snowstorm, UNHCR dispatched 148,903 CRIs to 40,038 beneficiaries.
- Damascus witnesses more than 90 rocket and mortar strikes in one day. Strikes were reported in the areas close to the Sheraton Hotel and the Four Seasons Hotel where UN staff reside as well as Kafarsouseh where UNHCR offices are based. UNHCR national staff are advised to work from home for two days.

FEBRUARY

- After a relatively long break without explosions in the heart of Damascus, a bus explodes on 01 February near the Old City killing at least six people and injuring over a dozen. The explosion resulted in heightened security throughout Damascus.
- On 05 February the heaviest attacks in over a year occur with 135 rocket and mortar attacks. Strikes were reported in the commercial and residential areas close to the both hotels where UN staff reside including one direct strike on the Four Seasons. UNHCR staff place on high alert and are again instructed to work from home.
- Cash assistance distribution benefits 19,683 individuals in Hassakeh and 3,053 individuals in Aleppo.
- UNHCR resumes the polio vaccination campaign across the country with UNHCR health volunteers vaccinating 6,774 children in three consecutive days.

MARCH

- UNHCR responds to the influx of 13,360 individuals mainly Assyrians from Tal Tamer in Hassakeh through the provision of CRIs.
- In response to the dire humanitarian situation of the population in Eastern Aleppo, UNHCR succeeds in crossing conflict lines to deliver urgently needed medicines and medical equipment for 5,000 patients and winter clothes for 2,000 children.
- On 28 March an inter-agency mission to Arrastan in Homs delivering CRIs to 33,250 individuals is hijacked. The 17 UN staff members are eventually released and are physically unharmed.

APRIL

- Naseeb crossing on the Syria-Jordan border is closed after being captured by AOGs which affects humanitarian aid shipments from Jordan to Syria.
- UNHCR dispatches 2,000 family tents to Tartous for distribution to IDPs fleeing from Idlib through UNHCR implementing partner, SARC.
- UNHCR carries out three cross border movements through the Nusaybeen crossing point between Turkey and Syria resulting in 30 trucks crossing over carrying CRIs for 25,000 people.
- New iris scan and laminated ID cards are launched by UNHCR to upgrade refugees' registration services.
- **One million beneficiaries are reached with CRIs.**

MAY

- On 20 May the ancient city of Palmyra was seized by ISIS causing many families to flee to the Al Quaryaten area south east of Homs. UNHCR responds with CRIs for 15,000 individuals.
- On 04 May 2015 UNHCR delivers CRIs for 2,500 people in the hard-to-reach Al Safira area in the Aleppo Governorate.
- The Mughambo neighborhood of Aleppo located in close proximity to UNHCR's field office is shelled. More than 40 mortars and rockets landed in the area, including two less than 300 meters from the office. All staff were safe and accounted for with no damage caused to the office.

JUNE

- Rockets and mortars hit Sweida City causing an unconfirmed number of casualties. An immediately headcount of UNHCR staff was initiated with all staff accounted for.
- The strongest attacks this year take place in Aleppo, targeting the city on more than five fronts simultaneously, causing many deaths and injuries. UNHCR staff, were all safe and accounted for, however due to insecurity a number of staff had to be temporarily relocated.
- World Refugee Day Celebrated throughout Syria.
- Large scale clashes in the southern areas of Hassakeh City leads to the displacement of an estimated 120,000 people, UNHCR leads the response.

JULY

- UNHCR, through its implementing partner Hama Social Care, opens the first community center in Hama Governorate, which is also the first protection entry point for IDPs and host community in the city.
- Mortars and rockets are fired into several neighborhoods of Damascus City, including the parking area of the Sheraton Hotel compound where UN staff resides damaging six UN vehicles. UN staff advised Sheraton is no longer safe and moved to another location.
- UNHCR succeeds in delivering CRIs to the hard-to-reach Qara village, Al Nabek and Kisweh in Rural Damascus for the first time since the beginning of the crisis.
- Water cuts in Aleppo City continue for the third consecutive week affecting, together with power outages and poor internet connection, UNHCR operations there.

AUGUST

- UNHCR carries out two cross border movements of 26 trucks through the Nusaybeen border crossing with Turkey carrying CRIs for 25,000 people. The CRIs are immediately moved to the UNHCR warehouse and unloaded.
- ISIS captures Al Quaryaten town in the Homs governorate causing influx of IDPs from Hawareen and Al Quaryaten to Hmira and Sadad. UNHCR responds through the registration of 1,100 IDPs and CRI distribution.
- In three days over 200 rockets and mortars hit Damascus. Houses of two UNHCR staff members are hit and the staff members and their families are unharmed.
- A mortar strikes a fuel station in the Al Inshaat area of Homs city, 300 meters from the UN hub in the Safir hotel, killing five civilians and injuring more than 30. All UN staff are safe and accounted for.

SEPTEMBER

- A complex VBIED attack in Sweida which killed a prominent leader in the area causes huge unrest. UNHCR staff there are instructed to work from home until further notice.
- Gunfire by a NSAG occurs in front of the UNHCR office in Qamishly. UNHCR initiates emergency procedures. UNHCR staff members in Qamishly safe and accounted for.
- An airlift takes place from Damascus to Qamishly in the Hassakeh Governorate carrying 4,883 winter clothing kits, four Rub halls and 2,600 winter sweaters to UNHCR warehouse in Qamishly and Newroz refugee camp.
- Refugees in Newroz Camp in Hassakeh governorate are granted a one-time cash assistance to mitigate some of their hardships and provide means for celebrating official ceremonies. The grant assists around 500 mainly Yazidis families.

OCTOBER

- UNHCR donates cancer medicines valued at over \$40,000 to a number of public hospitals in Syria. The majority of the medicines are not available within the country and are essential for cancer treatment.
- A total of 5,857 vulnerable children benefit from UNHCRs education grant to continue with their education
- An IED fastened to motorcycle explodes in Al Khalij square in Qamishly which is 700 meters from the UNHCR office. All UNHCR staff in Qamishly were accounted for and safe.
- UNHCR Winterization plan commences is targeting 750,000 individuals with 150,000 winter kits in the winter period of 2015- 2016.
- A joint UNHCR and WFP convoy from Damascus experiences heavy gunfire while entering the Al Ramousah entrance to Aleppo city. Subsequently the Ithriyah-Khanaser road to Aleppo was closed due to direct attacks for a number of weeks.
- 10,000 individuals are displaced from 15 villages in the northern Abdulazeez Mountains in the Hassakeh governorate to nearby villages in Tal Tamer. UNHCR responds through the establishment and the training of an identification team, IDP identification and CRI distribution

NOVEMBER

- 6,900 individuals flee southern rural Aleppo due to clashes. UNHCR responds with IDP registration and CRI distribution.
- UNHCR donates essential medicines valued at over \$1.4 million to SARC main pharmacy in Al Zahira clinic addressing the needs of refugee and IDPs in 10 UNHCR/SARC-supported clinics.
- After the ceasefire agreement in the hard-to-reach Zabadani in Rural Damascus, on 07 November, UNHCR dispatched humanitarian assistance to Rawdat Al Zabadani for the benefit of 2,500 individuals.
- Ithriyah-Khanaser road is reopened ending the two week old siege on Aleppo. UNHCR resumes dispatch of CRI kits for 25,000 individuals in the governorate.
- **Two million beneficiaries are reached with CRIs.**

DECEMBER

- Owing to clashes in northern rural Hama over five thousand people flee to Hama city. UNHCR and its partners respond through the provision of CRIs.
- The curfew on the Nusaybeen border crossing which is the Turkish-Syrian entry to Qamishly was briefly lifted for humanitarian purposes. UNHCR responds with a transshipment carrying 21,000 high thermal blankets and 12,000 plastic sheets.
- UNHCR managed to dispatch CRIs for 2,500 individuals in Rankous city in Rural Damascus. However the next day clashes between GoS forces and NSAGs resulted in the postponement by UNHCR of the distribution of CRIs to the area until further notice.
- A string of explosions hit Qamishly city killing more than 20 and injuring tens of people. One of them was a VBIED which exploded 350m away from the UNHCR office in Qamishly. All UNHCR staff there are safe and accounted for.
- UNHCR begins five airlifts to Qamishly which delivered 700 tents and 6,300 kitchen sets as part of contingency planning in the event of a large displacement from Raqqa.

HUMANITARIAN SNAPSHOT

13.5 MILLION

IN NEED OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

6.5 MILLION

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

4.2 MILLION

REFUGEES

4.5 MILLION

PEOPLE IN NEED IN HARD-TO-REACH AREAS

11 MILLION

PEOPLE REQUIRE HEALTH ASSISTANCE

OVER **250,000** DEAD

2.4 MILLION

PEOPLE LACK ADEQUATE SHELTER

1.7 MILLION

IDPs LIVING IN CAMPS AND COLLECTIVE CENTERS

1.2 MILLION

HOUSING UNITS DAMAGED AND

400,000

DESTROYED

58 %

OF PUBLIC HOSPITALS AND

49 %

OF PUBLIC HEALTH CENTERS EITHER PARTIALLY FUNCTIONAL OR CLOSED

5.7 MILLION

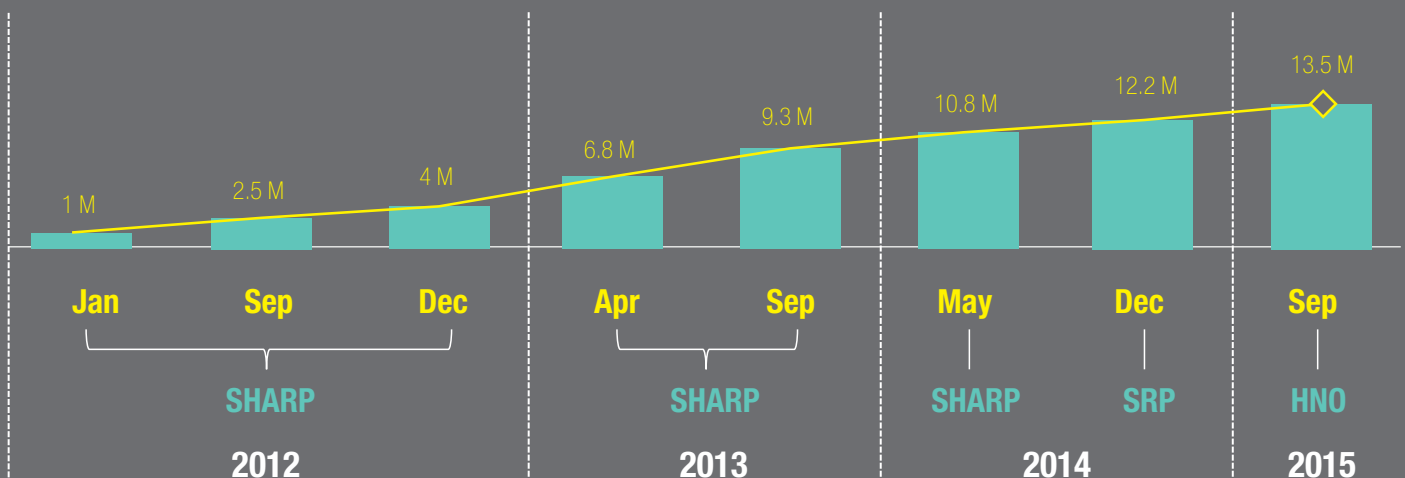
CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN NEED OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

8.7 MILLION

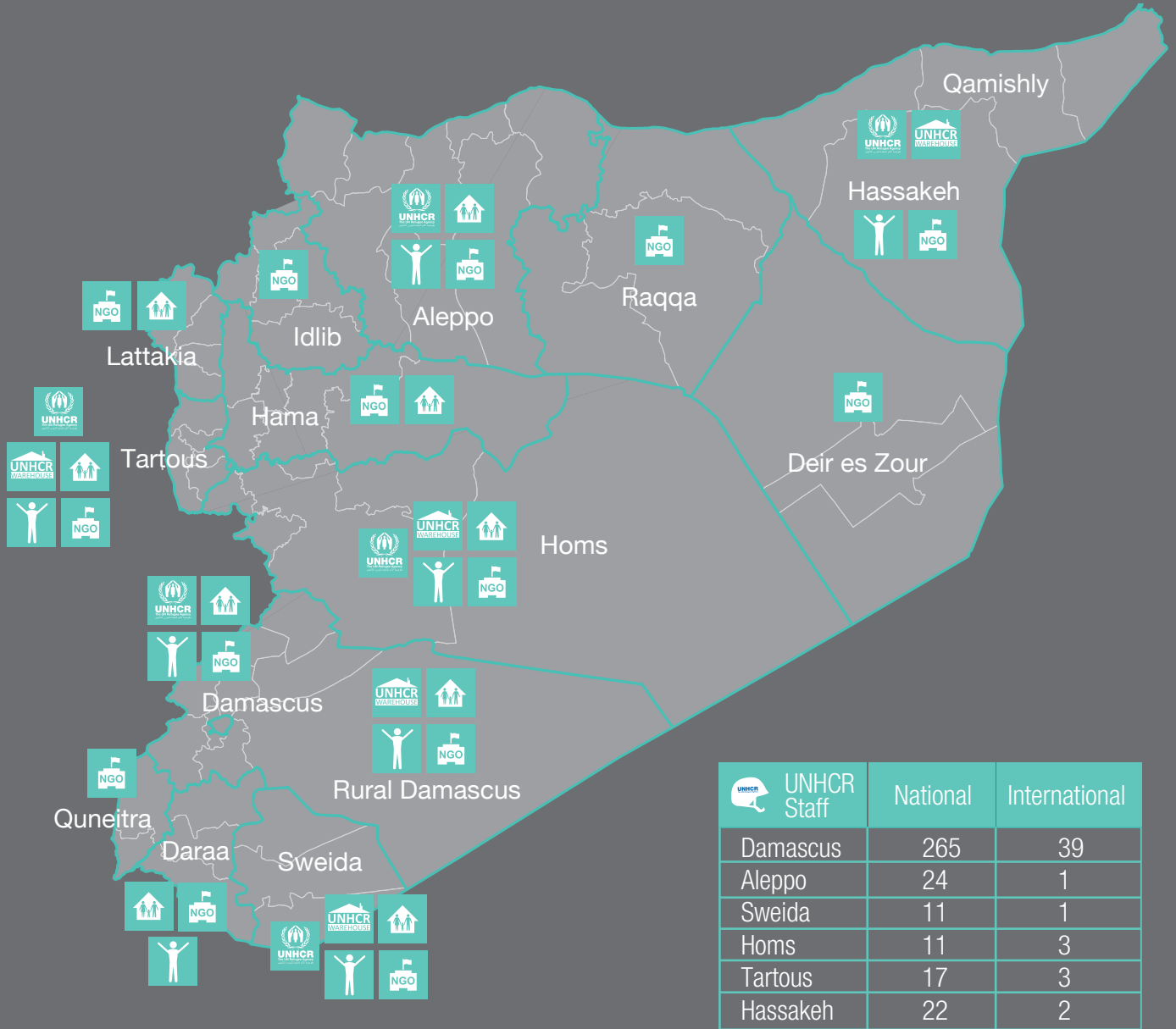
PEOPLE IN NEED OF A RANGE OF FOOD SECURITY-RELATED ASSISTANCE


SINCE THE ONSET OF THE CRISIS, THE AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY HAS FALLEN BY 20 YEARS.

POPULATION IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE




UNHCR PRESENCE IN SYRIA







UNHCR Offices




Community Centers



UNHCR Warehouses



Outreach Volunteers for IDP



NGOs

CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS FACED BY UNHCR



General Insecurity: Risk of collateral damage from gunfire, rockets and mortars, IEDs VBIEDs and PBIEDs as well as the increased risk of kidnapping.

Attacks on UN staff: Both the Sheraton Hotel and the Four Seasons Hotel where UN staff reside have been hit by mortars and rockets on a number of occasions. As a result of high levels of attacks the UNDSS advised all UN staff in Sheraton to vacate it. In March when an inter-agency cross-line mission comprised of 17 UN staff members was returning from the Arrastan area north of Homs and was hijacked by a group of armed men. They were later released unharmed.

Shifting lines of crisis: Most recently there have been shifts in Idlib, Daraa, Palmyra and Hassakeh resulting in limited/denied access to humanitarian assistance. In addition to these, the capture of the Naseeb crossing with Jordan by NSAGs in April has resulted in the closure of the border seriously impacting on UNHCR's logistic operations.

A proliferation and fragmentation of armed groups: There are now approximately 160 NSAGs operating in Syria resulting in constantly changing allegiances further complicating operating in this chaotic environment.

Use of sophisticated weaponry, indiscriminate attacks in densely populated areas: For example, on 05 February attacks took place with open sources reporting 135 rocket and mortar attacks. Further unannounced rocket and mortar attacks took place in Damascus on 22, 23 and 24 August with open sources indicating that over 200 rockets and mortars hit Damascus city. During the shelling, the houses of two UNHCR staff members were hit and in both incidents the staff members and their families were unharmed. These attacks continue on a regular basis not only in Damascus, but also in Aleppo and Homs.

Outflow of skilled colleagues and potential candidates: The brain drain abroad of qualified people has led to lack of expertise and capacity in many areas.

Grave violations of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law continue causing casualties and displacement whilst hindering access to key locations within Syria: Given the constraints in terms of humanitarian access, insecurity, the danger and sensitivities involved in carrying out sustained protection interventions in the midst of conflict, especially in areas controlled by ISIS and the limited protection capacity on the ground, it is clear that despite best efforts the protection needs of the conflict affected population remain significantly unaddressed.

Bureaucratic hurdles impeding access and delivery: These include visas for humanitarian staff, granting of facilitation letters for deliveries as well as note verbales for missions throughout Syria.

Decline in funding affecting the scope of UNHCRs response: In 2015, UNHCR needed USD 309.7 million to implement its Strategic Response Plan for Syria. However as of mid-December 2015, UNHCR Syria Office only received 43% of the funding requirement which is USD 132.9 million, leaving a funding gap of USD 176.8 million. UNHCR's programmes have been severely affected, leaving millions of people at risk. For example, this year, due to lack of funding, UNHCR Syria was forced to significantly reduce the weekly dispatch of CRIs in order to retain the capacity to respond to further emergency displacements

WHOLE OF SYRIA APPROACH

Since September 2014, humanitarian actors operating inside Syria from Damascus or across the Turkish and Jordanian borders decided to embark on a “Whole of Syria” (WOS) approach in an effort to improve the effectiveness and operational reach of their collective responses. In implementing this plan, humanitarian actors have committed to respecting the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. The UNRC/HC for Syria has continuously briefed the Syrian Government and kept them informed of the importance of the WoS approach and of the ongoing consultations with UN and other humanitarian actors.

As part of the WoS approach, the 2015 Syria Strategic Response Plan (SRP) was developed, in consultation with the Syrian Government, as an overarching framework for the humanitarian response inside Syria. It covered the period from 01 January to 31 December 2015, aiming to address large-scale humanitarian needs throughout all 14 governorates, using the most direct and effective routes to deliver assistance.

It also provides the umbrella for coordinated action to prioritize resources for the most affected areas and people in need, increasing access, response capacity and advocating for increased protection. Bringing together humanitarian actors working in Syria or from neighbouring countries for the first time under a single strategic framework, the plan aimed to increase the effectiveness of the response by improving the identification of needs and gaps inside Syria and strengthening the harmonization and streamlining of response activities across the different hubs, thus reducing overlap and duplication of efforts and increasing outreach.

In December 2015, the 2016 Humanitarian Response plan was developed aiming to further build on the previous plan.



“ Under the 2015 Strategic Response Plan and the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan UNHCR is Sector Lead in Protection and Community Services, CCCM and NFI/Shelter ”

The humanitarian strategy revolves around five key elements:

- Coordinated action
- Prioritisation of needs
- Ensuring access to affected people without discrimination
- Increasing response capacity
- Emergency preparedness.

The 2015 Syria Strategic Response Plan included **11** sectors/clusters:

- 01 Food Security and Agriculture
- 02 Shelter/NFIs
- 03 Health
- 04 Education
- 05 WASH
- 06 Protection and Community Services
- 07 Early Recovery and Livelihoods
- 08 Nutrition
- 09 Coordination and Common Services
- 10 Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)
- 11 Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications

Of these UNHCR is Sector Lead in Protection and Community Services, CCCM and NFI/Shelter and has responded by deploying dedicated Sector Coordinators and extra staff to ensure an effective response. Humanitarian actors responding inside Syria under the SRP needed over [US\\$2.9 billion](#) to assist up to [12.2 million people](#) in need, setting specific targets for each sector. However, despite the scale-up of the response, critical gaps remain. In 2015, UNHCR needed [USD 309.7 million](#) to implement its SRP for Syria. As of mid-December 2015, UNHCR Syria Office only received 43% of the funding requirement which is [USD 132.9 million](#), leaving a funding gap of USD 176.8 million.

For example this year, due to lack of funding UNHCR Syria was forced to significantly reduce the weekly dispatch of CRIs in order to retain the capacity to respond to further emergency displacements.

The 2016, HRP requires [US \\$ 3.18 Billion](#) to target [13.5 million people](#) in order to:

- Enhance protection by promoting respect for international law, IHL and HRL through quality principled assistance, services and advocacy
- Support the resilience of affected local communities, households and individuals within the humanitarian response by protecting and restoring livelihoods and enabling access to essential services and rehabilitation of socio-economic infrastructure
- Reinforce the response capacity of national humanitarian actors, ensure appropriate humanitarian response through seeking feedback from, and addressing concerns about the response, from affected people and apply ‘do no harm’ principles throughout the response.
- Support saving lives, alleviate suffering and increase access to humanitarian response for vulnerable people and those with specific needs.

WITH SO MANY PEOPLE
IN NEED OF PROTECTION
AND HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE IT IS
ESSENTIAL THAT DONORS
DIG DEEP IN THEIR POCKET
FOR THE COMING YEAR.



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PROTECTION



IN 2015 UNHCR
IN SYRIA REACHED 865,654 VULNERABLE PEOPLE WITH
PROTECTION SERVICES



©UNHCR /B.Diab 2015

UNHCR is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and find solutions to refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. UNHCR started its operations in Syria with the first Iraqi war in 1991 and expanded its operation exponentially with the massive influx of Iraqi refugees in the middle of the last decade.

In 2012, with the escalation of the crisis in Syria, UNHCR expanded the scope of its operations to respond to the humanitarian needs of increasing number

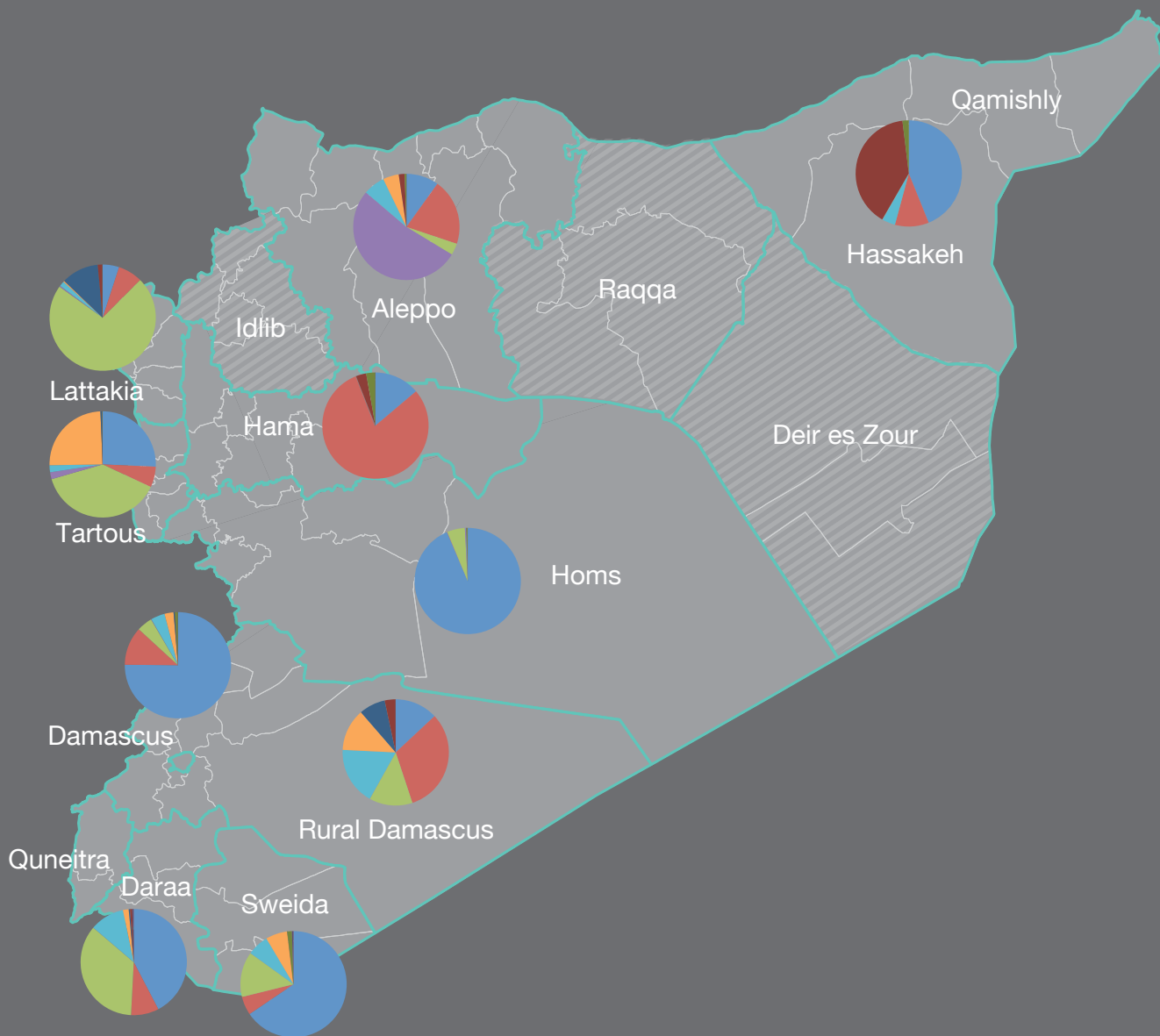
of internally displaced persons and other populations affected. To date, UNHCR undertakes programmes to support the Government's efforts, aiming at reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing protection, through a wide range of community-based activities, with particular focus on the neediest and most vulnerable population groups.

In order to provide community based protection and legal aid and maximize the outreach across key governorates hosting the majority of IDPs, UNHCR signed partnership agreements with a number of

new partners including International and National NGOs. The UNHCR Protection services provided included assessments, capacity building of UNHCR partners and outreach volunteers, targeted material assistance, socio-economic activities, recreational activities, psychosocial support (PSS), legal aid, SGBV referral and response, child protection activities, vocational training, community-based initiatives as well as awareness raising sessions on various issues, ranging from residency procedures to prevention of SGBV.

865,654 BENEFCIARIES

REACHED BY PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES INTERVENTIONS



UNHCR NATIONAL AWARENESS RAISING ON PROTECTION

During 2015 UNHCR designed leaflets comprising of simplified Protection related messages in Arabic which were widely disseminated across the country to inform the affected population about their rights but also to urge all parties to the conflict to provide Protection to IDP families. UNHCR’s partner SARC participated in this project and started distributing 500,000 leaflets as well as the WFP which has also incepted the dissemination of 500,000 leaflets with its food baskets in order to ensure wider outreach.

THE OFFICE HAS ADDITIONALLY INITIATED THE PROCUREMENT OF 1.2 MILLION COLORING CRAYONS TO BE DISTRIBUTED ALONG WITH THE LEAFLETS IN 2016.



LEGAL AID

With 6.5 million displaced in Syria, huge numbers of people have lost their personal status documents such as birth certificates and identification cards with more and more children born in areas where they are not registered due to lack of services, access, financial means or insecurity. Many IDPs are not aware how to apply for personal documents or how to replace their lost ones. Replacement of documentation is often difficult and entails complex administrative procedures. The lack of documents limits people’s coping mechanisms, compromises the ability to move easily and, in some instances, constrains access to humanitarian assistance. This often results in people being subject to harassment, extortion, exploitation and loss of access to basic services such as education and health. UNHCR in cooperation with its partners The Syria Trust, SARC, DRC and Al Taalouf provides these people with legal aid as many are not aware of the procedures involved in obtaining new documents or registering their children. Initiatives on further expansion of such awareness campaigns are underway and it is expected that with the continued implementation of the Civil Documentation Project, the number of individuals who need replacement documents will exponentially increase in the coming period. UNHCR also made advances in advocating on behalf of IDPs with the Directorate of Civil Affairs of the Ministry of Interior in Syria in order to ease the procedures of re-issuing critical documents lost or destroyed, particularly personal IDs and family books. Accordingly, an administrative decision was taken by the government to issue temporary ID documents for those who came out of besieged areas as well as accept petition to receive replacement documents based on the digitalized central database. IDPs can now file petition in the place of their residence for requesting replacement ID card instead of the earlier regulation which required them to file petition only in their governorates of habitual residence. Moreover, a new civil registry department was established in central Damascus to serve IDPs from other governorates.

In 2015, UNHCR provided legal aid in 10 governorates with the assistance of 34 lawyers. The plans to increase the number of lawyers to 110 lawyers in 12 Governorates for 2016 was initiated.

In addition 27,414 IDPs from the affected population benefited from the Legal Aid Project as follows:



◆ DOCUMENTATION – A HUGE PROTECTION CHALLENGE

In 2015, UNHCR in cooperation with its implementing partner The Syria Trust for Development designed and distributed a simple flyer to raise awareness on the importance of birth registration and the consequences for non-registration such as the lack of access to services and future problems in school enrolment.



UNDOCUMENTED - ONE CASE – THREE GENERATIONS

Ahlam Babelly is a lawyer and the legal coordinator in the UNHCR supported Al Taalouf legal advice center in Tishreen in Aleppo. The center which provides legal awareness sessions, legal counseling and free legal interventions is presently dealing with over 800 cases split between three lawyers, the majority of which to do with documentation. In addition, the Outreach Volunteers work in the community identify vulnerable individuals with protection issues and refer them to the center as well as providing awareness to people in relation to their legal rights.

Ahlam says that unregistered births are a particular problem because if the birth is not registered within a certain period of time there is a fee which many IDPs cannot afford. This begins a vicious cycle if the child is not registered they do not legally exist and therefore cannot exercise their basic rights and access basic services, such as enrolling at school. When dealing with these cases, the center through UNHCR funding, pays for both the legal representation and the fee.



Ahlam giving legal advice
©UNHCR /B.Diab 2015

She gave us an example that she was dealing with, a case where 25 people; grandparents, parents and children are all undocumented due originally to illiteracy and lack of knowledge of the procedures but now also to displacement. When asked about how she was handling the case she replied “slowly, steadily and carefully’ with a smile.



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In January 2015, UNHCR Syria developed a child protection strategy for 2015 - 2017 which includes the legal framework, key approaches and actions as well as child protection mainstreaming and coordination. This was necessary because children from different age groups were constantly being exposed to various protection concerns. Separated families, unaccompanied children, children with disabilities in addition to school drop-outs, child labor, exploitation and child recruitment are concerns that have increased significantly due to the crisis in the country.

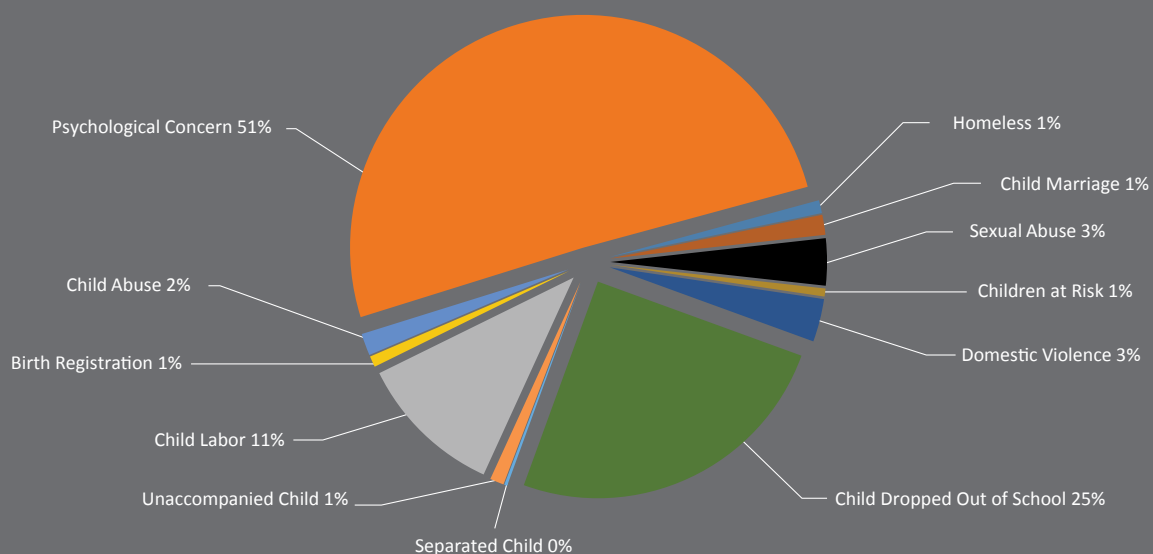
UNHCR in coordination with its partners tries to tackle these concerns by ensuring that Protection is mainstreamed in recreational and child friendly activities. Partners have been trained on case management and identification of child

protection concerns during these activities. As enshrined in the Convention of the Rights of the Child, children have the right to play. Therefore, UNHCR supports four Child Friendly Spaces (CFS), one Children and Family Care Center (CFCC) and several recreational activities in collaboration with its partners.

In 2015, UNHCR with the support of SARC, established Children's Clubs in the Khan Danoun Shelter and in the Sweida governorate. Children's clubs were also established in cooperation with SARC, GOPA and other local NGOs such as Al Baraem Association. These clubs have proven very effective in identifying various protection issues, in particular psychological concerns amongst children and will be further supported in 2016.

BY THE END OF 2015, AND IN PLANNING FOR THE 2016 CHILD PROTECTION INTERVENTION, UNHCR INITIATED THE PROCUREMENT OF 10,000 CHILDREN KITS INTENDED FOR RECREATIONAL, SPORTS, AND PSYCHOSOCIAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN COLLECTIVE SHELTERS.

CHILD PROTECTION RISKS IDENTIFIED IN 2015



SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Due to the crisis in Syria, many norms regulating social behavior have been weakened and some traditional social systems have broken down which has led to increased levels of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). While some forms of SGBV such as sexual violence are still very much underreported as many survivors are reluctant to report the abuse due to stigmatization, shame or fear, social acceptance and impunity of perpetrators, other forms of SGBV have been commonly observed by UNHCR and local partners including child marriage and domestic violence.

The UNHCR SGBV response for IDPs is challenged by the limited services for survivors, lack of awareness about existing services, lack of access, weak national legal frameworks, stigma and community attitudes in addition to cultural acceptance of some forms of SGBV such as child marriage and domestic violence.

In 2015, the SGBV response was provided in the form of identification, counseling and referral. Most cases of survivors were identified through the PSS services, awareness sessions and the outreach volunteers. In 2015, UNHCR aimed at introducing SGBV identification and response as an integrated element in all community centers, especially in view of the positive role the community centers play in identifying the protection needs of IDPs and the affected host communities.

UNHCR's approach in this regard aims to build the capacity of the staff and volunteers of the implementing partners to carry out proper identification, counseling and referral of survivors, enhance the network of services specifically in the area of legal aid as well as raise awareness among IDPs on the occurrence of SGBV and available services. Each community center has been supported with trained staff dedicated to follow up on SGBV survivors. In 2015 through IMC, UNHCR provided training on basics of SGBV for 324 frontline workers and training on SGBV case management for 42 social workers in the community centers. Additionally 21 gynecologists were trained on clinical management of rape in order to contribute to the network of services addressing the needs of GBV survivors.

UNHCR through its partners also raises awareness of IDPs on SGBV issues. In 2015, 1,402 awareness sessions addressing 44,499 IDPs were conducted in collective shelters or through the community centers in different governorates.

◆ AT PRESENT SGBV COUNSELING AND REFERRAL IS TAKING PLACE IN SEVEN COMMUNITY CENTERS IN TARTOUS, LATTAKIA, HOMS, SWEIDA, DARAA, ALEPPO AND DAMASCUS, THROUGH WHICH CLOSE TO 300 CASES WERE IDENTIFIED AND ASSISTED DURING THE YEAR. MOST CASES ARE OF SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD MARRIAGE WHILE SEXUAL VIOLENCE CONTINUES TO BE UNDERREPORTED.



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THROUGH SGBV TRAINING DIMA HOPES TO CHANGE HER HUSBAND'S ATTITUDE

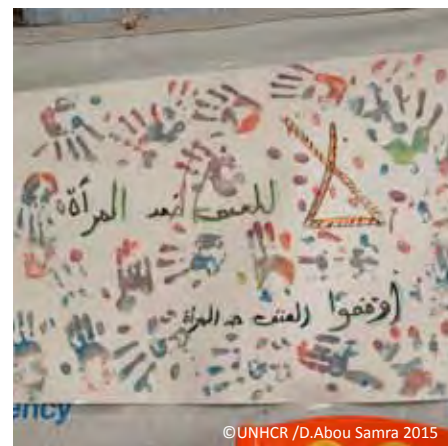
Dima is a 32 year-old displaced woman who fled Rural Damascus to Sweida city where she, her husband Raed and their three kids rented a small house costing SYP 25,000 per month. During this time Raed became aggressive with the family but passive in finding solutions to the challenges they face every day. "Raed has many health issues that prevent him from finding a proper job, however, he still opposes the idea of me finding a job", said Dima. Dima also mentioned that on a number of occasions she was subject to violence and when she heard about an SGBV course organized by UNHCR and IMC from one of her neighbors, she decided to join the training as "I felt that the course might help me understand the reaction of my husband and help to solve our issues", she says.

"The course was so informative and it dealt with the reasons behind my husband's attitude such as stress, financial strain and despair. Having discussed other similar cases to myself with both the trainer and other attendees, I am confident that I can better deal with him and convince him that being jobless is not shameful and that I can also assume responsibilities and work to support our family.", says Dima with hope in her eyes.



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16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM CAMPAIGN



On 25 November, UNHCR launched the “16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence” campaign which ran until 10 December adopting the global theme, 'Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: *Make Education Safe for All*', with special focus on young people. Access to safe education enables children and youth to learn and develop critical skills, capacities and confidence, making it one of the most powerful tools for realizing a better future for affected people, and a core component of UNHCR’s protection and durable solutions mandate. However, children and young people encounter numerous barriers in seeking access to safe education, including sexual and gender-based violence.

UNHCR Syria, in cooperation with its partners, engaged the community in discussions about how education can be a safe environment free from any shape of SGBV. The campaign in Syria also entailed awareness sessions for parents and youth, interactive theatre, movie shows, recreational and educational activities for children, adolescents’ artwork, puppet shows on education role in preventing SGBV in shelters, community centers, public schools and within the community covering nine governorates in Syria with the participation of 11 partners, with a total number of 14,264 beneficiaries.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION



Inspired by the Syrian tradition of solidarity and social collaboration, UNHCR designed several programmes to provide proper Protection to the affected communities. This approach contributes to a sustainable Protection response in Syria tailored to the real needs of these communities.

In 2015, UNHCR continued to expand with a four-pronged operational community-based protection concept: **Community Centers, Outreach Volunteers, Community-Based Initiatives and Empowerment of Local Organizations.**



UNHCR Team observing Women’s Vocational Training during the opening of the Community Center run by its partner the Syria Trust in Lattakia in November ©UNHCR /B.Diab 2015

In 2015, UNHCR supported 30 community centers in nine governorates in Syria, out of which 12 opened during the second half of the year. Lattakia also witnessed the opening of the first community center during the year. Unfortunately, the community center located in the besieged Qudsaya in Rural Damascus remains closed due to the current security situation in the area.

The community centers have proven to be an effective means to access beneficiaries in the most challenging contexts as well as assisting persons with specific needs while promoting peaceful coexistence, social cohesion and community participation. All interventions of the community centers are designed in line with UNHCR’s AGDM approach. Attention is given in particular to persons with specific needs, i.e. counseling, education programme, livelihood and vocational training, start-up business grant, material assistance distribution, awareness raising and psychosocial support activities. Over 1,000 beneficiaries per month are supported by UNHCR and partners with a variety of Protection services through the community centers.

In preparation for 2016 an ambitious target of 80 community centers throughout 11 Syrian Governorates, UNHCR, in close consultations with national and international partners, concluded agreements with regard to 72 community centers in collaboration with the existing partners.



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◆ OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS

The role of UNHCR volunteers is not limited to reaching the IDP population, but also to support them, ensure their participation, identify their vulnerabilities, advocate for their right to have access to humanitarian services, explore local capacities and provide proper support including care giving to persons with specific needs, information dissemination and awareness.

In 2015, the outreach volunteers Programme vastly expanded with five new partners in Homs and Hama. Through GOPA, Al Nada, Al Tamayouz, The Syria Trust, Al Taalouf, Al Namaa, Al Birr, Social Care association, Child Care Society, Oun, Al Batoul and Al Ihsan, UNHCR was able to mobilize more than 420 IDP members from different age groups and social backgrounds to act as outreach volunteer workers active in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Sweida, Daraa, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Hassakeh, Tartous and Lattakia.

During the year, new outreach approaches were initiated in UNHCR field offices and by partners, including thematic structures where the volunteers were trained on specific themes of child Protection, SGBV, PSS, field and community services, as well as new teams were established to ensure adequate response to the needs in the community. Moreover, the role of the outreach volunteers in their communities was stepped-up so that they become leaders mobilizing the community. For instance, the outreach volunteers with Al Nada in Damascus succeeded in engaging more than 50 IDPs from collective shelters in community work. The volunteers equipped these people with guidance and support to actively function in their communities. The services were delivered with zero cost and under the close monitoring of the outreach volunteers. This initiative led to the idea of “Club of Volunteers” which will be launched in 2016 to mobilize volunteers in the affected communities.

Moreover, UNHCR invests in outreach volunteers through building their capacity, with 375 outreach volunteers receiving Protection Induction training this year alone.

- ◆ **Prior to the conclusion of the year, UNHCR had already received firm commitments from partners covering almost 1,800 ORVs towards the 2016 target of 2,000. The Office has additionally procured 550 tablets to facilitate the accurate and immediate capturing of information, assessment of needs, and referral utilizing the ORVs in the field.**

ROUQIA - IDP, GRADUATE, OUTREACH VOLUNTEER



Rouqia at the Community Center in Sweida
© UNHCR /B.Diab 2015

Rouqia who has a degree in psychology from the University of Damascus was displaced from Daraa to Sweida in 2012. During her time in Sweida she released there was a massive need for PSS amongst the displaced there and she decided to help. In 2013 she became an Outreach volunteer, a role she loves and is proud of. She tells us that due to the conflict the fear she sees in the children is heartbreaking. They react very badly to loud sounds, many of them suffering from wetting themselves and many more are becoming withdrawn and afraid. Amongst the elderly she encounters depression, high pressure and constant worry. When she comes across these cases she provides support and often refers them to the UNHCR funded GOPA community center for further assistance. In June of this year she tells us about a 14 year old girl she met during a home visit. “She was withdrawn and suffered from extreme fear because she was the survivor of an attempted kidnapping” she says. Through one to one counseling and constant home visits and support, including her attending a number of PSS activities, the girl gradually became more confident. “By the end of the summer the girl sent a letter to the center saying thanks to everyone for their help and she loves herself again and has no more fear, this is what makes my job worthwhile, when I see a problem and can help solve it, this gives me great satisfaction” Rouqia says with a huge smile.

◆ COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES

24

UNHCR Syria recognizes the important role of CBIs as a suitable approach to respond to some of the challenges identified by the affected communities and find solutions for their problems. The fundamental approach of the programme is to place communities in charge of designing, managing, implementing, and monitoring their own initiatives.

In 2015, UNHCR supported a total of 288 CBIs in nine governorates benefiting approximately 75,000 displaced people or people from the affected communities in the field of education, health, shelter, child protection and women empowerment.

A workshop was conducted in November where more than 20 voluntary groups presented their initiatives to be implemented in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs and Tartous. The workshop included training on Code of Conduct, UNHCR guidelines of Procurement and a participatory discussion session among the groups. Towards the 2016 target of 600 CBIs, UNHCR's partners' commitments had already surpassed the said figure indicating a strong commitment towards attending to the vast and urgent needs on ground.



Amal Teaching Students
©UNHCR /D.Mc Sweeney 2015

'HOPE' BRINGS HOPE TO CHILDREN IN ALEPPO

Amal in Arabic which means hope, is a 24 year college graduate who was displaced to the Tishreen area of Aleppo. Whilst there she noticed the large amount of children who had dropped out of school and decided to help them. Initially she found a completely bare room in an unfinished building and began teaching a small circle of children, with no equipment sitting on the hard concrete floor. With the help of a UNHCR Community Based Initiative she has transformed this bare room into a functioning classroom, now catering for 45 children.

Local tradesmen volunteered to smooth the floor and organize bathrooms, while UNHCR provided plastic sheeting to insulate the walls, chairs, tables, a whiteboard and paints so the children themselves could decorate the walls. In addition each child receives a full stationary pack to ensure this cost is not a barrier for attendance.

◆ COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Empowering local organizations and fostering their humanitarian role proved to be a proper strategy to respond to the needs of communities in the country especially as these organizations are more knowledgeable than others of the needs of the communities within which they operate.

UNHCR therefore continues to provide grants to qualified local NGOs in the country for implementation of quick impact projects offering assistance to local communities in the field of vocational training, education, PSS and women and children empowerment, with focus on persons with specific needs. UNHCR together with a core group of partners GOPA and Al Taalouf invested in the training of these local NGOs to make the assistance they offer more sustainable.

Throughout the year of 2015, the community-based organization funded 24 quick impact projects in five governorates:

◆ ALEPPO

With a total number of 13,607 beneficiaries, UNHCR in cooperation with Al Taalouf supported 13 quick impact projects in Aleppo during the year despite the challenging security and services circumstances in the city. The implemented CBOs were directed to serve the persons with specific needs, empower women and provide vocational training and special educational services.

◆ DAMASCUS

This year the programme witnessed a great expansion in Damascus where five CBOs were funded to launch new PSS services and activities for children and youth with capacity building opportunities for the most vulnerable IDPs. The need to support those local NGOs raised from the genuine unsatisfied needs of the increasing number of IDPs within Damascus. The total number of beneficiaries expected during the implementation period will exceed 3,580 beneficiaries.

◆ HOMS

One community-based initiative was implemented in Homs in 2015 addressing 1,200 adolescents with language and computer skills training.

◆ LATTAKIA

Three quick impact projects took place in Lattakia in 2015 with a total number of 2,000 beneficiaries. 60% of the targeted beneficiaries were persons with specific needs. The CBOs provided physiotherapy services and special vocational training opportunities for them.

◆ SWEIDA

A total of 900 beneficiaries received services from two CBOs that took place in Sweida, one was targeting children at risk with variety of protection services while the other established a physiotherapy center for persons with special needs.

YOUTH INITIATIVE FUND 2015

UNHCR proposal for the 2015 Youth Initiative Fund supported by the UNHCR Headquarters was one of the 14 successful proposals out of the 92 submitted. The initiative brought together youth from diverse economic, social and cultural backgrounds and provided them with training and support to become active protection actors within their communities. In particular, the initiative targets the protection of young girls and children. It also provides a platform for youth to promote social cohesion and enable Syrian youth to be engaged in identifying local community needs and jointly devising campaigns to tackle these needs.

The participants in the initiative gained key transferable skills that will better involve them in raising awareness on protection issues including SGBV, child protection, peaceful coexistence and livelihoods. A total of 50 young people were involved in facilitating the project with other 100 involved in various activities in order to create a multiplier effect throughout the different target communities.



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Due to the conflict and to continuous explosions near their home, sisters Nadine (16 years) and Loujain (12 years) and their family fled Arrastan in the Homs governorate to Hama city. Before they left they suffered severe damage to their hearing, leaving them deaf. This led to them refusing to go to school or even mixing with other children leaving them isolated and depressed.

When the girls' mother heard about UNHCR's partner Social Care Hama she approached the case manager seeking assistance for her daughters. After referring both sisters for medical

assessment, hearing aids were provided leading to them hearing again. However, this was not enough to solve the problem of their isolation and refusal to attend school. The case manager began working with Loujain engaging her in some of the regular Psycho Social Support recreational activities conducted for different age groups. After a number of sessions, Loujain began communicating with other children and eventually even went back to school.

The older sister Nadine was a more difficult case with her continuously refusing all kinds of interactions with

others. However, through one to one counseling the case manager discovered that Nadine had a talent for art.

The case manager persuaded Nadine to participate in a UNHCR supported art exhibition that Social Care was organizing. She organized art supplies and asked Nadine to prepare new drawings in addition to the old ones. At the exhibition she had a full wall dedicated to her art. This event changed Nadine's life because during preparations, she began to communicate with the organizers, and was delighted when her drawings were praised by the visitors.

SELF-RELIANCE / LIVELIHOODS AND EDUCATION

◆ VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In 2015, over 15,000 IDPs and host community members benefited from the vocational and life skills trainings organized by 11 partners; Al Nada, GOPA, SARC, IMC, PU, Al Tamayoz, Al Birr, Social Care, Aoun, Child Care Society and Namaa. The types of training were determined in consultation with the beneficiaries through focus group discussions and surveys. The courses included a variety of subjects including hairdressing, computer, language courses, graphic design, cosmetics, knitting, sewing and painting. In linkage to that, and in preparation for 2016, UNHCR has initiated the initial procurement of 2,000 livelihood kits to be distributed to PoCs who have lost their means of living.

◆ SMALL START-UP BUSINESS GRANT

In 2015, the small start-up business grant was introduced in the activities of UNHCR implementing partners; Al Nada, GOPA, SARC, Social Care and Namaa with over 100 business grants. These grants were provided to empower the most affected IDP women and men in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Sweida and Tartous governorates following a comprehensive set of business training that tackles market research, project management, feasibility study, drafting business plan and submitting projects.

FARAH AND HIBA...FROM FIXING TO PRODUCING ACCESSORIES

Both Farah and Hiba expressed their gratitude for the support from UNHCR and its partner GOPA in providing them with an opportunity to improve their life through the vocational training programme. Farah and Hiba previously enrolled in one of the vocational programme courses supported by UNHCR and GOPA. These two ladies are the main supporters and the bread winners of their family who was forced to leave the original neighborhood Hay Al Arman in Homs as a result of the current conflict seeking a safe place. Those ladies made their choice by taking a course in making accessories, fixing and remodeling old ones. In a short time period, Farah and Hiba switched from fixing old and used accessories to producing all sort of gifts and displaying them in the new shop that they opened.



FARAH outside the shop with the GOPA Volunteer
©UNHCR /GOPA 2015

◆ PRODUCTIVE UNIT

The productive unit adds a valuable change by providing incentives improving women's economic situation throughout a six-month period where they produce items and sell them in the market such as blankets, sheets, pillows, mobile covers, jackets and others. The productive unit is playing an important role in linking, particularly displaced, widowed, affected women, with the local market after on-the-job period. In 2015, over 700 women were able to find jobs and be active members leading their role within a family. Additionally eight Bazaars were organized by UNHCR and its partner Al Nada in Damascus governorate. The event displayed handicraft items produced by IDP women residing in collective shelters as well as women with special needs in the productive unit.



©UNHCR / V.Tou'meh 2015

◆ CASH-BASED ASSISTANCE

With 6.5 million individuals displaced due to insecurity and damage of dwellings and services in their areas, the need for flexible support for their various needs is paramount and a key life-saving element.

UNHCR benefited from its operational experience with refugees and began in 2012 to assist vulnerable internally displaced persons in Syria with cash in order to foster their coping mechanisms, protect them from exploitation or engagement in harmful practices and cover their basic needs.

This unconditional one-time cash grant complements the UNHCR CRI and shelter assistance, gives IDP families the possibility to invest in their priority needs in a dignified way and maximizes the impact on beneficiaries' welfare by doing away with the logistical costs, lengthy procurement procedures and security constraints normally associated with other types of assistance.

Based on UNHCR vulnerability criteria, beneficiaries are usually selected and provided with a grant equivalent to \$200 to cover their most critical needs issued by cheques to be cashed at the bank or at the distribution center by the bank staff. In 2015, UNHCR distributed cash to 22,731 beneficiaries in Aleppo and Hassakeh governorates.



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◆ ACCELERATED LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR IDPs AND AFFECTED SYRIANS

Over 12,000 IDP children in Damascus and Rural Damascus benefited from UNHCR educational programmes for preparatory and secondary grades including remedial classes, preparatory lessons for the 9th and the 12th grades, summer camps and lessons for children with learning difficulties in seven collective shelters, ten public schools, ten private institutes and community centers in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs, Tartous, Latakia, Jableh, Daraa, Hassakeh and Sweida. The implemented activities were conducted through UNHCR partners, namely PU, GOPA, Al Nada, SARC, Social Care, Al Tamayoz, Al Birr, Aoun, The Syria Trust, Child Care Society and Namaa.

QUSSAI – A LITTLE HELP INSPIRES EXCELLENCE

Qussai is an 18-year old young student who moved to Al Nabek a year ago due to the unrest in his home town Al Mesherfeh in Homs. He was in the high school year when he joined the UNHCR supported remedial classes organized in the Al Nabek community center and managed to recapitulate what he missed. He showed high commitment throughout his study and exerted a lot of effort throughout the year.

Qusai successfully achieved his high school with a high mark of 228/ 240 and was ranked as the top student in Al Nabek. Well Done Qussai.



◆ SUPPLEMENTARY TRAINING

UNHCR, through its partner PU, completed PSS training workshops for 200 teachers in Homs and Tartous governorates. The training sessions were organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the trainees were selected based on the MoE assessment and included topics on communication skills, PSS, and other subjects.

◆ SCHOOLS REHABILITATION

As the rehabilitation of schools is the top priority of the Education Sector in Syria given the fact that more than 5,000 schools were out of service as a result of the protracted crisis, UNHCR participated in rehabilitating four schools through its partners, GOPA and PU in Sydnaya, Syhnaya, Masaken Barzeh and Dummar Al Balad in Damascus and Rural Damascus, benefiting 6,000 boys and girls and giving them safe and equitable access to formal education.



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SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS

◆ MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

A total of 78,226 IDPs benefited from the mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) primarily embedded in community centers and within eight primary health care services in ten Governorates. The activities included:

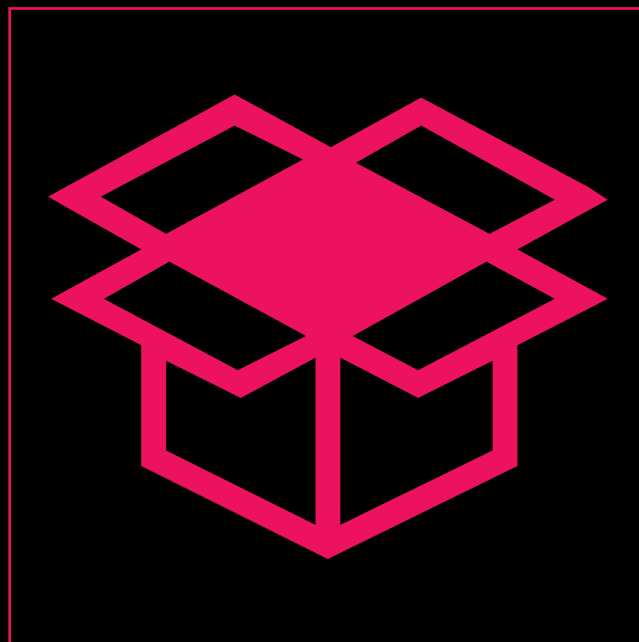
(a) community and family support to 64,937 IDPs, ranging from soft PSS structured recreational activities targeting children, adolescents and mothers to awareness raising sessions and PSS support in education; (b) focused non-specialized services to 11,003 IDPs, including case management and group PSS counseling by psychologists; and (c) specialized services by psychotherapists and/or psychiatrists to 2,286 IDPs. Assistive medical devices were also provided by UNHCR with four partners in five governorates to around 237,985 IDPs in need through community centers and primary health care clinics.

During the last quarter of 2015, and as part of the preparations for 2016, UNHCR initiated the procedures for procuring 2,000 kits especially designed for the home-based rehabilitation programme for children with mental retardation.



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CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRIs)



IN 2015 UNHCR
IN SYRIA REACHED 3,213,275 VULNERABLE PEOPLE WITH MORE
THAN 9,046,097 CORE RELIEF ITEMS



©UNHCR /D.MC Sweeney 2015

Core Relief Items (CRIs) sometimes known as Non-Food items (NFIs) are items other than food used in humanitarian contexts, when providing assistance to those affected by natural disasters or war. When people are displaced due to conflict they become vulnerable, often fleeing and losing everything, including their homes and supportive social networks.

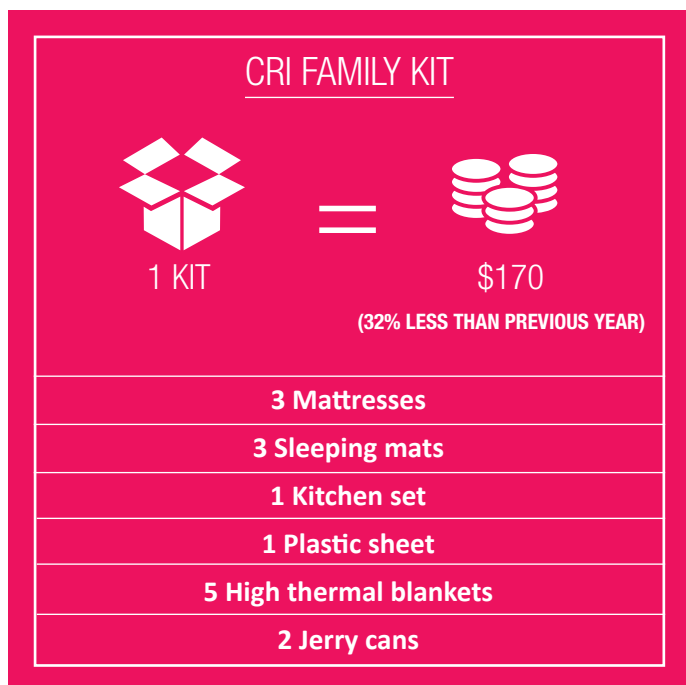
In addition due to the cyclical nature of displacement in Syria the loss of CRIs means that the affected population often needs repeated assistance. Thus distributed items often need to be replaced because they have been lost, damaged, have exceeded their life-span

or were left behind during displacement. UNHCR contributes to the physical and psychological health of displaced populations through the provision of CRIs which assists maintaining their dignity and providing for some of their basic needs. In Syria, UNHCR's CRI kits include essential household items such as mattresses, blankets, plastic sheets, containers for water, cooking utensils and hygiene kits. In addition, other items can be added to the kits during times of extra hardship, such as rechargeable fans in very hot summers as well as portable heaters and winter clothes during the harsh winters in Syria.

To fulfil the growing needs of the displaced throughout Syria who often flee their homes with nothing but the clothes on their backs and ensure that UNHCR distributes lifesaving CRIs to as many of the 6.5 million IDPs as possible, UNHCR runs a huge logistical operation involving everything from forecasting, planning, and budgeting to local, regional or even global procurement. In 2015 UNHCR in order to support the local economy, began sourcing and procuring some CRIs in Syria. Despite this, many goods remain unavailable because of the limited production capacity due to the crisis.

CRI KITS

Due to budgetary constraints UNHCR has had to 'Do more with less' so as such, the family CRI kit has been changed slightly from the previous year to include extra essential items and be more cost effective.



UNHCR DISPATCH ACROSS CONFLICT LINES

UNHCR reached during the year 33 hard-to-reach areas in Aleppo, Hassakeh, Daraa, Homs, Quneitra and Rural Damascus. These cross line missions resulted in 657,784 vulnerable beneficiaries receiving CRIs. The access was gained through UNHCR missions, inter-agency missions and regular programmes. For example, on 08 March 2015, a UNHCR cross-line mission led by the UNHCR Syria Representative during a negotiated six-hour ceasefire accessed the hard-to-reach areas of Bustan Al Qasr, Al Ansari, Al Firdos, Al Sukari and Mwasalat neighbourhoods of Eastern Aleppo to deliver urgently needed medicines and medical equipment for 5,000 patients to the Al Zarzour hospital in Bustan A Qasr, and winter clothes for 2,000 children in Jisr Al Haj.

More recently in December, as part of a peace agreement in Al Waer in Homs city, the last area of the city under Non State Armed Group control, UNHCR participated in two inter-agency convoys to the besieged area which had not received humanitarian assistance since 2013. The distributed core relief items benefited 45,000 individuals and included mattresses, blankets, baby and adult diapers, sanitary napkins, plastic sheets, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, hygiene kits, jerry cans as well as winter clothing.

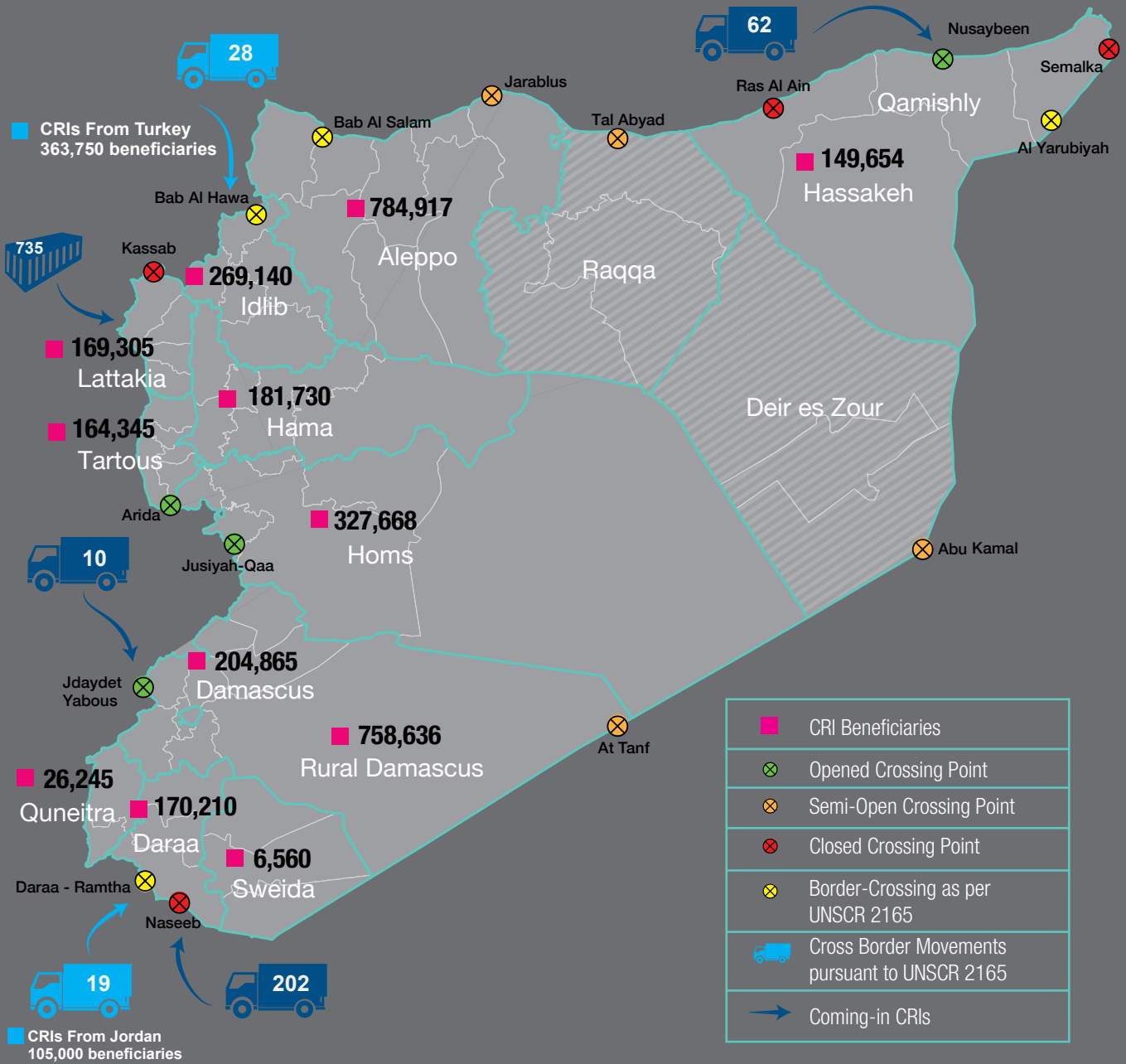


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©UNHCR /SARC 2015

CRI DISTRIBUTION IN 2015 HAS REACHED 3,213,275 BENEFCIARIES IN 12 OUT OF 14 GOVERNORATES IN SYRIA



657,784 INDIVIDUALS
WERE REACHED THROUGH CROSS-LINE DELIVERY INCLUDING
471,033 INDIVIDUALS
IN 33 HARD-TO-REACH AREAS

DIMINISHED BORDER CROSSINGS

The takeover by non state armed groups of the Naseeb border crossing between Syria and Jordan leading to its closure on 02 April, continues to have a significant negative effect on UNHCR humanitarian operations in Southern Syria. To mitigate this, UNHCR scaled up its cross border movements through the Lebanese and Turkish borders as well as assistance coming through the ports in Tartous and Lattakia. For instance, three cross border transshipments were closely coordinated through the Nusaybeen crossing between UNHCR Turkey and UNHCR Syria in the Hassakeh governorate carrying CRIs for 100,000 people.

In 2015, a total of 274 trucks from UNHCR entered Syria through Lebanon, Turkey and through Jordan (before the closure of Naseeb border crossing). These were organized as part of UNHCR regular programmes and do not include the cross border operations taking place pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2165.



CROSS BORDER PURSUANT TO UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 2139, 2165, 2191 AND 2258

Security Council resolution 2165, passed on the 14 July 2014 asserts that United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners could, with notification to the Syrian authorities, use the border crossings at Bab Al Salam, Bab Al Hawa, Al Yarubiyah and Al Ramtha in addition to those already in use, 'to ensure that assistance, including medical and surgical supplies, reached people in need throughout Syria through the most direct routes'. This builds on an earlier resolution UNSC 2139 that came into place on 22 February 2014 which demanded that all parties put an end to all forms of violence and attacks against civilians and facilitate the expansion of humanitarian relief operations. In addition, Security Council resolution 2191 was adopted unanimously on 17 December 2014 and extended through UNSC resolution 2258 on 22 December 2015 confirming that United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners could continue with notification to the Syrian authorities, to use these crossings until 10 January 2017.

Security Council Resolutions 2139, 2165, 2191 and 2258 are important tools in recalling the obligations of all parties under International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law and provides leverage to negotiate safe and unhindered access to the growing number of internally displaced people and civilians in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. Core principles of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law underpin humanitarian action, including cross-line and cross-border operations, to ensure continued neutrality, impartiality and independence. However, practically speaking, for any operation to be effective, it requires the consent of all parties to the conflict.

IN 2015 a total of 47 cross-border convoys took place: 28 through the Bab Al Hawa crossing in Turkey and 19 through the Ramtha crossing in Jordan. These missions provided CRIs for 468,750 individuals in the Daraa, Quneitra, Hama, Idlib and Aleppo governorates.

CHALLENGES ♦

LIMITED FUNDING

AFFECTING THE QUANTITY OF CRIs DISTRIBUTED

SECURITY

HINDERING DELIVERY OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO SOME AREAS IN NEED

INSUFFICIENT DATA ON IDPs AND HOST COMMUNITIES

HAMPERING EFFECTIVE PLANNING AND ADVOCACY

SHIFTING LINES OF CRISIS

PREVENTING DELIVERY OF TIMELY, NEEDS-BASED ASSISTANCE

NGOs LIMITED NUMBER AND CAPACITY

AFFECTING THE DISTRIBUTION OF CRIs

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

CAUSING DELAYS IN BOTH THE IMPORT OF CRIs AND DISPATCH PROCEDURES

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SANCTIONS

IMPEDING PROCUREMENT OF ESSENTIAL HUMANITARIAN SUPPLIES FROM OUTSIDE SYRIA

INFLATION OF PRICES ON BOTH CRIs AND FUEL

HAVING NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE DISPLACED POPULATION



©UNHCR / Z.Mreyoud 2015

WINTERIZATION

The winter conditions during the beginning of the 2015 caused great suffering to many Syrians, especially in contested and hard-to reach areas. Temperatures in January 2014 fell as low as minus 13 degrees centigrade in many areas in the country. The snowstorm Salam which hit Syria on 07 January 2015 caused chaos and further hardship for Syrians throughout the country with roads impassable, intermittent communications, electricity and fuel shortages resulting in many people being unable to heat their homes or themselves. This storm also had a significant effect on the humanitarian situation for IDPs in Syria, especially those who were sleeping in parks and other exposed sites. UNHCR urgently responded in cooperation with humanitarian workers from Implementing Partners by dispatching 150,000 CRIs such as mattresses, thermal blankets, sleeping mats, winter clothes and plastic sheeting to over 40,000 beneficiaries across Syria.

This year UNHCR began its winterization programme 2015 - 2016 in the second week of October with a prioritized target of 750,000 people using 150,000 winter kits. Out of 150,000 winter kits, 130,000 are being distributed through partners and field offices as part of the regular programme. The remaining 20,000 kits are part of the contingency stock for emergency response in case of a sudden new displacement. The standard winter kit is composed of winter clothes, thermal blankets and plastic sheets. Priority is given to the newly displaced individuals, people in hard-to-reach areas, people with specific needs and vulnerabilities such as unaccompanied minors or elders, single women as well as people with disability, mental health problems or serious medical conditions and chronic diseases.

In Aleppo a supplementary winter package was agreed upon to cover 20,000 individuals residing in 100 skeleton buildings, pending more durable shelter interventions. The Aleppo supplementary winter package includes sleeping bags and shelter kits consisting of timber, plywood and a tool kit which will enable the residents of the skeleton buildings to reinforce and adjust their shelters to changing climate conditions. Shelter Sector partners will distribute shelter kits and provide technical support on its usage. Since the programme began UNHCR in 2015 has assisted 452,317 individuals with winter items, 60% of the total target.



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A SIMPLE BLANKET CAN SOMETIMES MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

LITTLE AHMAD: A BLANKET MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

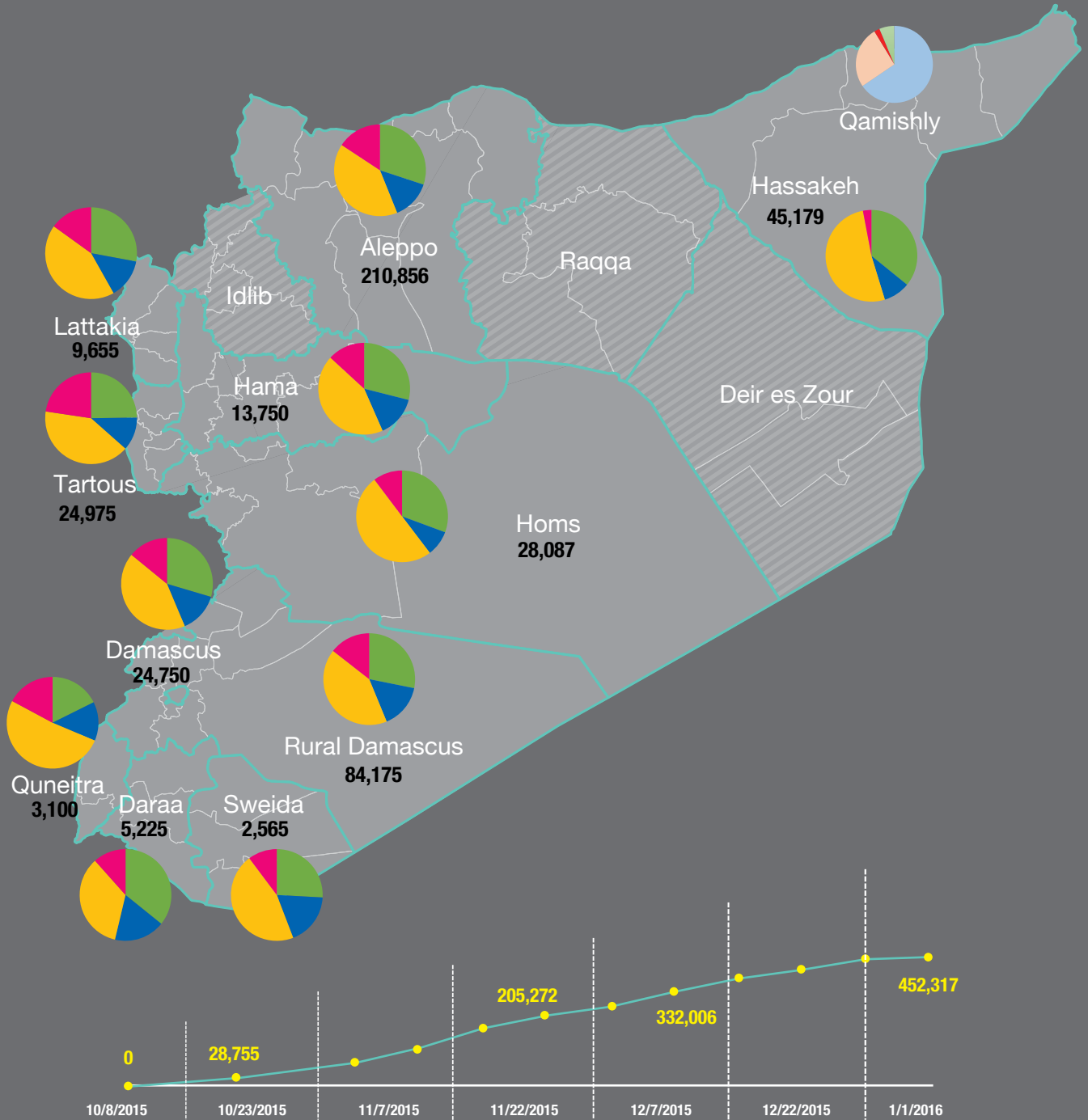
Ahmad is a four-year boy who has never seen peace. He was born after the Syrian conflict began and just like many other children in Aleppo, he was born displaced. As he and his family live in a skeleton collective shelter, he is constantly exposed to the elements such as cold, wind and rain as well as the danger of falling from balconies.

During a recent UNHCR CRI distribution Ahmad tells us "I am here waiting with my parents to get my blanket and winter clothes, yes all I need during this cold weather is that grey blanket and those new clothes... Today I am very happy to get them".



WINTERIZATION PROGRAMME

452,317 BENEFICIARIES ASSISTED



SHELTER



IN 2015 UNHCR
IN SYRIA REACHED 61,064 VULNERABLE PEOPLE WITH
SHELTER SOLUTIONS



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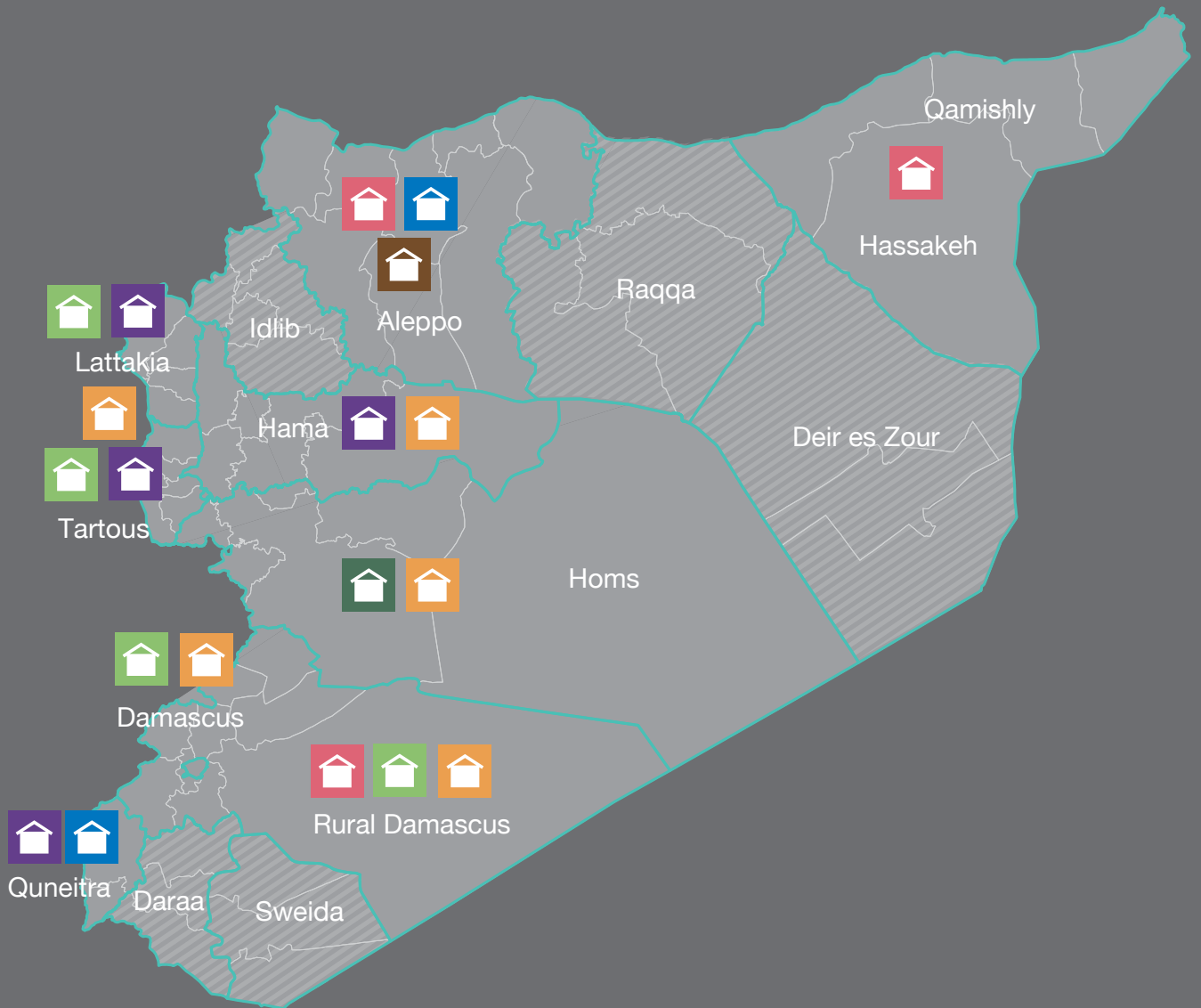
Due to the continuous clashes in Syria, 1.2 million houses have been damaged, out of which 400,000 have been totally destroyed causing millions of people to flee to official collective shelters such as schools, public buildings, tower buildings, unfinished buildings, hospitals, basements and mosques or to host families mostly from the local communities in other areas.

Currently, an estimated 6.5 million people are displaced; 1.7 million live in collective centers and 7.8 million have insufficient access to markets.

With this number of people now displaced inside Syria and 4.2 million Syrian refugees, the majority of whom are in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, many of whom have been displaced multiple times, the country remains the largest and fastest evolving displacement crisis in the world. Syrians, including residents, IDPs and hosts, in particular women, children, the elderly and the disabled who live without shelter or in damaged or unfinished buildings are considered most at risk. Most of them face trauma, distress or a great deal of suffering due

to the conflict. They often reside in poor living conditions, suffering from the lack of protection and basic services such as food, water, electricity and garbage solutions, which in some cases have resulted in the outbreak of diseases such as scabies, head lice and diarrhea.

61,064 BENEFICIARIES



Collective Shelter Rehabilitation
7,406 beneficiaries



Re-upgrade of Collective Shelters
7,731 beneficiaries



2,480 Dispatched Tents
12,400 beneficiaries



Private Shelter Upgrade
19,080 beneficiaries



Owner-Oriented Shelter support
2,240 beneficiaries



Establishment and Support of
Operation and Management Units
11,895 beneficiaries



Housing Units
312 beneficiaries

UNHCR RESPONSE

UNHCR continues to respond to emergency shelter needs and as lead of the Shelter Working Group worked very closely with its implementing partners such as the Ministry of Local Administration, Première Urgence (PU), Syrian Society for Social Development (SSSD), The Syria Trust for Development, Secours Islamique France (SIF), Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and UN-Habitat to provide appropriate and equitable shelter to affected populations in order to save lives, reduce suffering and manage vulnerability. Emergency shelter interventions focus on saving and sustaining lives. The shelter response provides shelter kits, construction materials/tools, emergency shelters such as tents both inside and outside of sites/camps, the improvement of collective centers and spontaneous sites in addition to transitional housing units.



◆ SHELTER REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation has been undertaken at official collective shelters in order to improve the physical condition of the buildings including water and sanitation facilities. The minimum standards were agreed upon by the Shelter Working Group to guide agencies and ensure that all required facilities were available in collective shelters. UNHCR and implementing partners conducted detailed technical assessments of the needs for each collective shelter, including minimum protection standards that all shelter interventions should consider such as collective spaces for women and children, locks on doors for private family space, lighting in private and collective areas, including in corridors, toilets and bathroom.



◆ PRIVATE SHELTER UPGRADE

UNHCR continues to implement Private Shelter Upgrade with the implementing partners as one of its main shelter response options assisting IDPs who live outside official collective shelters. Through closure of the openings and creating WASH facilities, the project has successfully improved the physical conditions of private shelters, mostly unfinished buildings, by sealing open windows, fixing doors and setting partitions in open spaces to provide privacy to families.



◆ TENTS

Tents are provided when other options are not available due to conditions in the area such as a lack of buildings that can serve as shelters or due to an urgent need to find a secure place for IDPs. One noticeable example this year was in April when UNHCR dispatched 2,200 family tents to assist 11,000 displaced people fleeing the heavy fighting in Idlib.



CHALLENGES

The major challenges in shelter programming in Syria are security concerns in a volatile context, cumbersome administrative requirements and procedures, funding shortfall and donors' reluctance to invest in shelter response within Syria, complicated interaction between stakeholders in the WoS framework, sudden imposed emergencies, forcing partners to develop immediate response impacting agencies' capacity, funding and other resources as well as unpredictability of the political and social context in Syria and the greater regional context. In addition, the shelter response cannot be considered in isolation and needs to be part of a holistic package of multi-sectorial support to the affected populations. Shelter activities need to be planned in union with other sectors such as WASH, Protection, Education, Health, Early Recovery and Livelihoods.

SHELTER PRIORITIES IN 2016

In 2016 UNHCR and its partners will prioritize resilience building by promoting the cohesion and recovery of communities. This will be done through rehabilitation of family housing and the repair and improvement of public and communal infrastructures. Access to electricity will be increased through the support of alternative systems for example the greater use of solar energy. In addition UNHCR plans to support owners and entitled tenants to re-establish their lives within their neighborhood in order to both assist people and promote community cohesion and resilience. The improvement of community infrastructures such as schools, health posts and utilities such as water and electricity will then result in the empowerment of communities and promotion of self-help initiatives within them.

'THINKS OUTSIDE THE BOX' WITH EARTH-BAG HOUSES

With the displacement of so many people in Syria, the shelter needs are massive with classical shelter interventions no longer able to meet all the shelter needs of the displaced population. As a result of this, UNHCR has had to 'think outside the box' conceptualizing, designing and launching additional types of shelter assistance, stressing community empowerment and utilizing its capacity. A number of pilot shelter projects have been launched recently for assistance through cash for work programmes and supported access to essential building materials. One of the most innovative examples is the earth-bag house construction system which is a simple tool utilizing Cash for Work in the construction of an emergency shelter. In September UNHCR concluded a fifteen day appraisal in Qamishly of this earth-bag house construction system and found that the construction of the earth-bag house is an efficient way to solve requirements encountered when people have to be provided with a basic home within a short period of time. Furthermore, the construction does not need a profound knowledge so that the house can be built by the beneficiaries themselves. Compared to tents the earth-bag built house has many advantages without being a permanent construction and can easily be dismantled and the material can be reused. In addition this system gives beneficiaries the opportunity to work and earn income as well as stimulate small business opportunities.

- The construction of the earth-bag houses is easy to learn and user-friendly making them easy to build by unskilled people or communities.
- An earth-bag wall is strong, owing to its thickness and weight, thus is considerably more resistant to high winds or other destructive forces such as earthquakes and floods.
- They are very adaptable, as it is easy to alter the position of wall openings during construction, or to dismantle an incorrectly placed wall and subsequently rebuild it with the very same material. Also the house can be easily divided into rooms using curtains or light partitions and the extension of walls can also allow future expansion. In addition plumbing and electrical fittings can easily be fixed to the earth-bag walls.
- Increased safety, as there are no piles of bricks on site that may be subject to theft, only the bags, which are easily secured, and a pile of earth, which has no value. Furthermore, the earth-bag house offers excellent fire resistance and extra protection from bullets, compared to tents.
- Their suitability for remote locations as it is only mainly the bags that need to be transported to the site so an earth-bag building can be utilized quickly at remote sites in emergency situations.

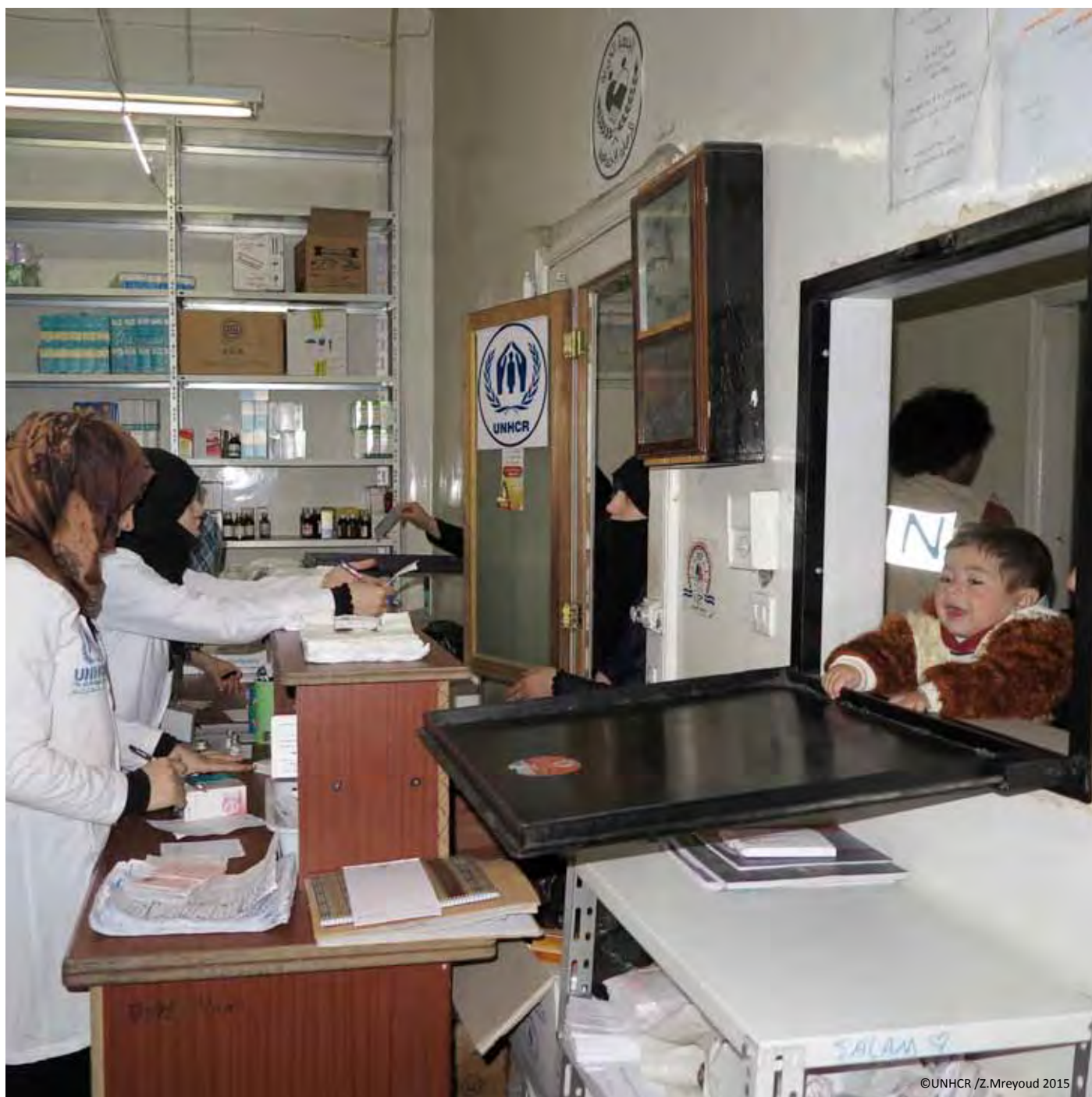


BECAUSE OF ITS SUCCESSFUL TESTING OF THIS PILOT PROJECT UNHCR IS NOW PLANNING TO EXPAND THE EARTH-BAG HOUSE SHELTER SOLUTION IN 2016 TO OTHER AREAS IN COOPERATION WITH ITS IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS.

HEALTH



IN 2015 UNHCR
IN SYRIA REACHED 797,432 VULNERABLE PEOPLE WITH
HEALTH CARE SERVICES



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Since the inception of the crisis, primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare services in the country have deteriorated due to damaged health facilities, power outages, and shortages of lifesaving medicines, medical supplies, and qualified healthcare professionals, including female health workers for reproductive health services. 2015 was marked by an intensification of the crisis and an increase in the health needs of people living in Syria. The shortage of specialized medical staff, ambulances, equipment and medical supplies led to an increased number of preventable deaths. The lack of basic utility services including electricity, fuel, safe drinking water and basic sanitation services have increased the vulnerability to disease outbreaks such as diarrheal diseases,

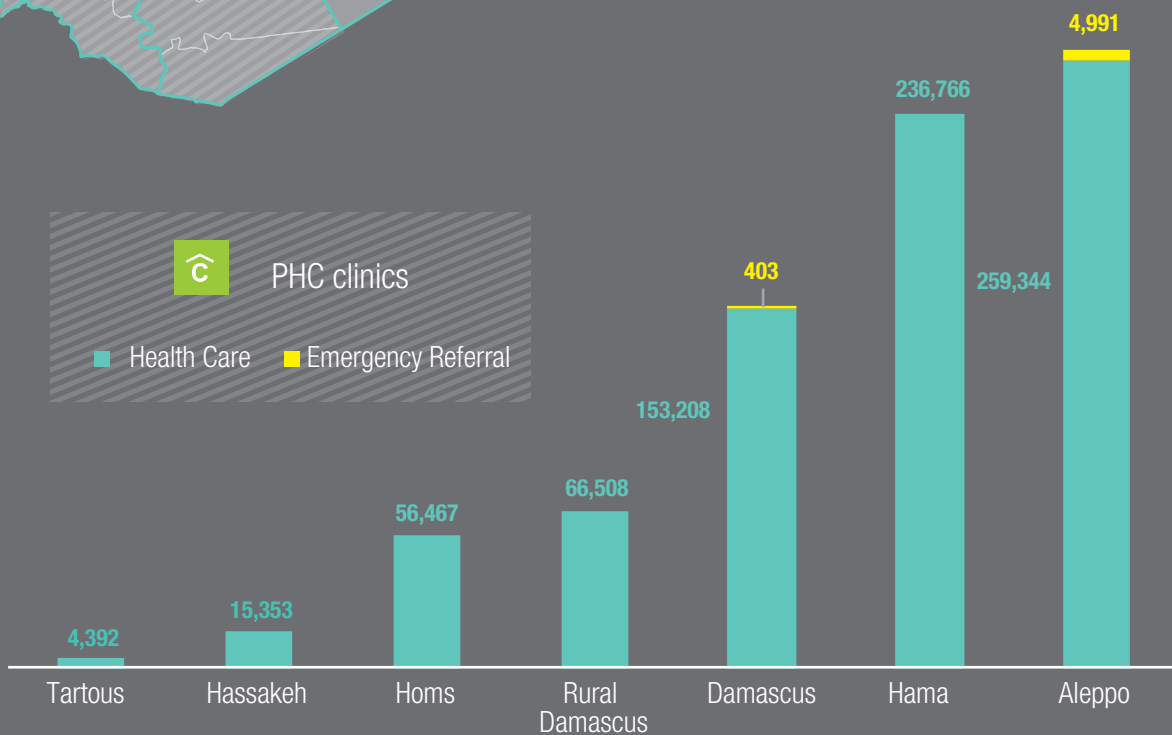
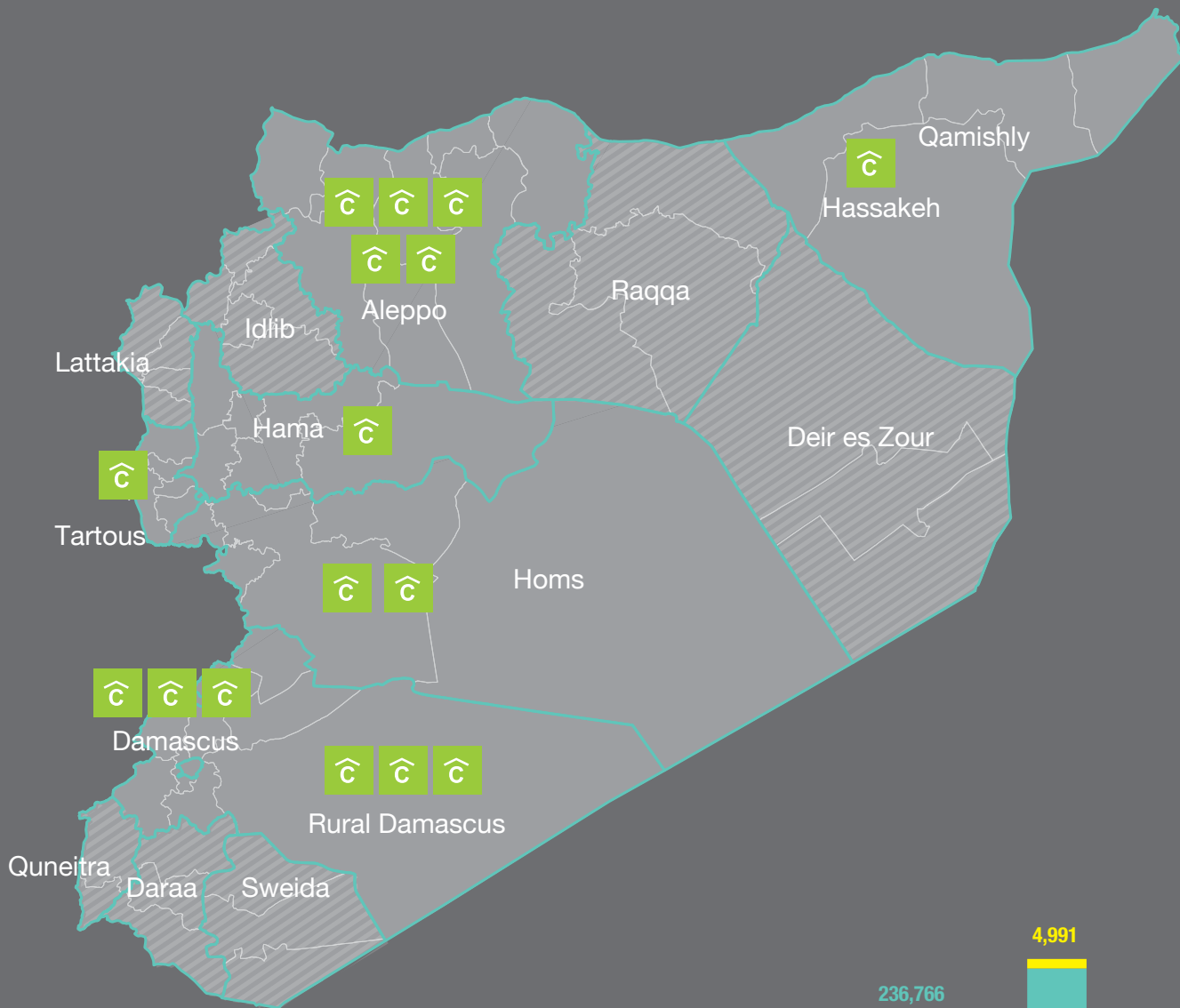
typhoid, hepatitis A, as well as other vaccine-preventable diseases. Essential health services have been further disrupted by the exodus of qualified healthcare workers abroad, a 60% drop in local production of pharmaceuticals, and a 50% increase in prices of locally produced pharmaceuticals.

Over 640 health care workers have been killed since the crisis started and an estimated 58% of public hospitals and 49% of public health centers are either partially functional or closed. In northern Syria, only 36% of health facilities are operating forcing many health care providers to operate out of buildings not designed for health service delivery. People with life-threatening chronic diseases such as diabetes, kidney

failure, asthma, epilepsy, cancer and cardiovascular illness are at an increased risk of dying or developing complications because access to life-saving medications and care is becoming more problematic. A severe shortage in skilled-birth attendants, including obstetricians, means that there are major obstacles to providing care to an estimated 300,000 women who are pregnant and need targeted support. Only 10% of primary health care centers provide basic mental health services and the number of people seeking mental health care is increasing with current estimates indicating 600,000 people are now living with severe mental illness, especially those suffering from depression, anxiety, psychosis and stress related conditions in Syria.

797,432 BENEFICIARIES

HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE



THE RESPONSE

As most Internally Displaced Persons lack the financial resources necessary to pay for health care and medication, UNHCR's approach to health aims mainly to protect them from risks to their health and well-being through providing free access to Primary Health Care (PHC) which mainly includes:

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE (PHC) CLINICS

UNHCR supports 22 PHC clinics in six different governorates; Damascus, Rural Damascus, Hassakeh, Aleppo, Homs, Tartous and Hama benefiting patients through the provision of PHC which includes medicines for acute and chronic diseases.

MEDICINES

Through direct procurement by UNHCR, a list of more than 200 items of medicines for primary health care, including specialized cancer medicines unavailable within Syria was procured and delivered to 10 SARC clinics.

Specialized cancer medicines and other life-saving medicines unavailable within Syria was procured and delivered to public hospitals.

EMERGENCY REFERRAL

One of the components of the health support was the support to life-saving medical and surgical interventions identified by the partners. Partners in Damascus, Aleppo Hama offered close to 6,000 IDPs emergency interventions including urgent surgeries, obstetric, and intensive care.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

Being displaced by conflict inevitably causes adverse effects on the psychological, social, emotional and spiritual well-being of people. MHPSS services were integrated through a MHPSS multifunctional team in community centers and eight UNHCR supported clinics.

UNHCR in cooperation with Partners and SARC has provided MHPSS to 5,399 individuals.

OUTREACH SERVICES

Many IDPs are unable to access available health care services due to insecure environments, long distances, and lack of affordable transport, disability or fear of stigmatization. Through its outreach volunteers, UNHCR managed this year to conduct regular checks on the well-being of 2,894 affected people who are housed in their communities.



BABY FIRAS ... ONE OF THE LUCKY ONES

In November, a man was walking in Aleppo when he heard a noise. On investigation he found an abandoned baby boy, only a few hours old and in bad condition. He rushed the baby to the UNHCR supported Al Taalouf hospital, where the resident physician assessed him and referred him directly to the neonatal intensive care unit. Baby Firas was premature and in very bad shape, suffering from scratches and bruises, hyperthermia and septicemia.

He was put immediately in an incubator and his vital signs were monitored on an ongoing basis. Through the fantastic, loving and intensive care provided by the staff there, his condition was stabilized and he was discharged to social services. With so much death and destruction in this conflict, the care and love that baby Firas received gives us all hope for the future.



THE IMPORTANCE OF ORAL HYGIENE FOR CHILDREN

In December, UNHCR in collaboration with its partners the Al Nour charity society and GOPA launched the Oral Hygiene Awareness Campaign for Children in order to contribute to the provision of health care for children and reduce the risk of dental diseases for children diagnosed with Diabetes and Thalassemia.



Given the fact that Oral/ Dental treatment is unaffordable by many Syrians during the crisis, a group of third year students of Dentistry in Damascus University began conducting interactive awareness raising activities about the importance of Oral Hygiene, the examination for the detection of early signs of dental disease and the provision of dental sealants for children between 4-14 years in schools, medical centers and the Golan Child friendly Space. In this UNHCR supported initiative which targets 1,000 children, the students in University of Damascus will additionally offer free treatment by the university to the children who are diagnosed with teeth cavities after the end of the campaign. At the end of the awareness sessions all children received a dental hygiene kit.



FIELD OFFICES



ALEPPO



DAMASCUS



HOMS



QAMISHLY



SWEIDA



TARTOUS

ALEPPO

COVERING THE NORTH WEST



UNHCR staff in Aleppo Field Office are still operating in difficult conditions in terms of security where three staff members had to relocate to safer areas and a UNHCR armored vehicle was hit by a gunfire. The lack of infrastructure including water and electricity shortages continues to remain a major challenge. Despite this:

- In 2015, UNHCR participated in four cross-line missions to hard-to-reach areas assisting 10,000 vulnerable individuals in Eastern Aleppo, 10,000 individuals in Big Orem, 11,140 individuals in Kafar Hamra and Maaret Elartiq as well as 10,000 individuals in Eastern Aleppo.
- Through its implementing partners; SARC, Al Taalouf and The Syria Trust for Development, UNHCR managed to distribute CRIS to 784,917 individuals in Aleppo.
- A supplementary winter package for Aleppo governorate was designed for IDPs residing in skeleton buildings or unprotected environments. 210,856 individuals were assisted with these winterized items in 2015.
- UNHCR shelter activities supported 4,826 individuals through the use of sustainable materials and 4,850 individuals through shelter kits installed by the IDPs themselves.
- Four new community centers were opened by UNHCR in cooperation with its implementing partners in Aleppo.
- UNHCR provided health services to 264,335 individuals in its supported medical centers. Medical support was also enhanced by introducing new specialties such as Orthopedic Medicine, Otolaryngology, Neurology and Gastrointestinal. A panorama dental device was also installed in Al Akarmieh PHC medical centers.

ABO AZIZ: A BARBER DEDICATED TO HIS CHILDREN

Abo Aziz is a barber and a father of eight children who was displaced from Salah Aldin to Aleppo due to the conflict. Although he and his family suffered badly with both his house and barber shop totally destroyed he did not give up and found a way to go on. With a little help, he decided to put his skills to use and opened a small barber business. Using UNHCR plastic sheeting he built his white salon and now earns a living not only to feed his kids but also to educate them.

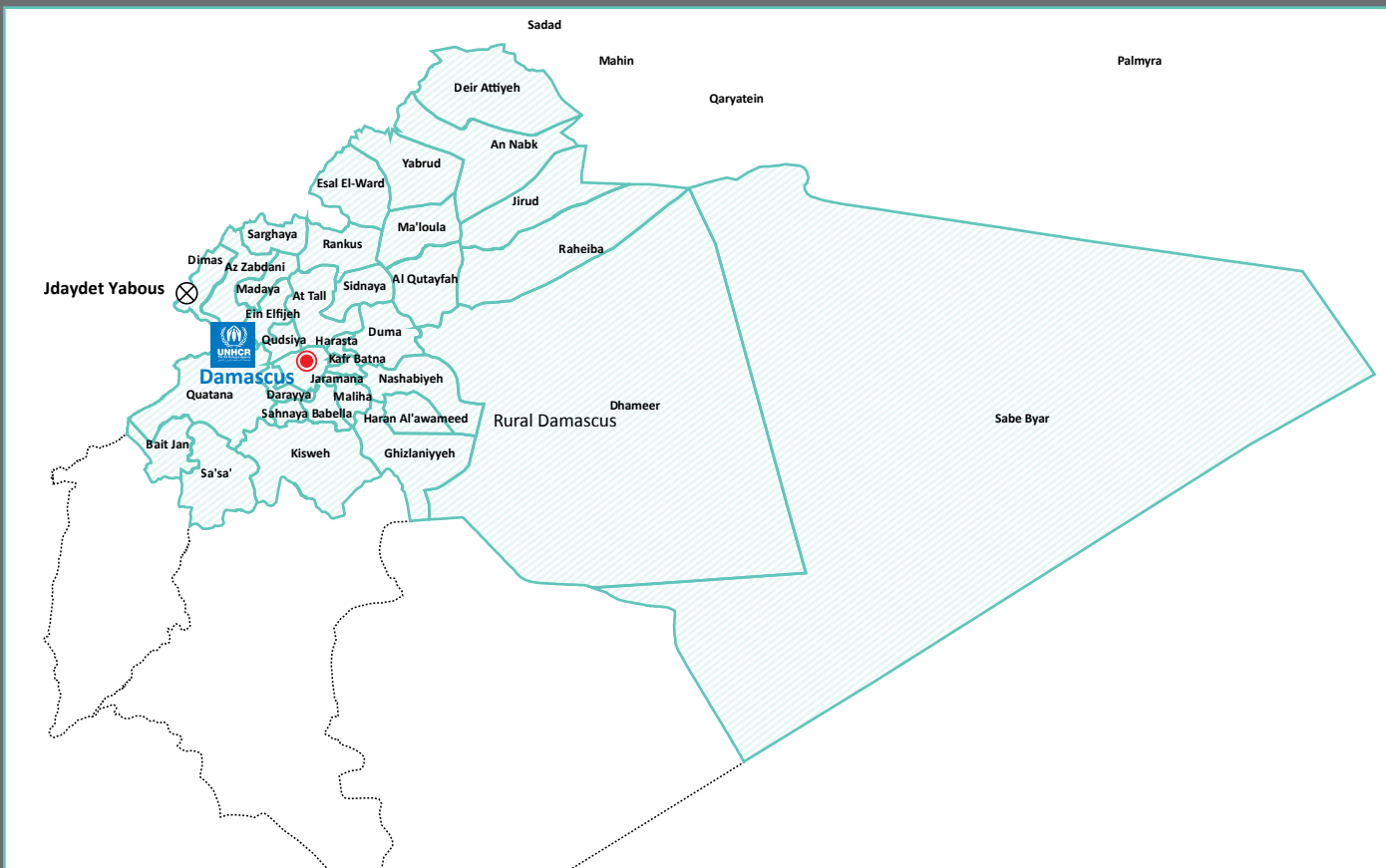
He expressed great gratitude for the help of UNHCR and says “Being an IDP does not mean I let my kids in the street or make them work, they have the right to be in school, I will work hard in my plastic salon no matter if it is cold or hot, I will work hard not only to earn money but also for my dignity”.



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DAMASCUS

COVERING THE CAPITAL AND SURROUNDINGS



2015 saw considerable intensification of military operations in Rural Damascus with some positive outcomes from the official reconciliation processes in some areas and disruption in the reconciliation processes in other areas. This year UNHCR Field office Damascus:

- Responded to the evacuation of families from East Ghouta, which remains under siege since 2012, through protection interventions and the distribution of CRIs in Dahiet Qudsaya, Al Dweir camp and Herjallah official shelter.
- Gained access to many hard-to-reach areas in Rural Damascus such as Zakyeh, Rural Kesweh, Al Tal, Yabroud, Yalda, Babila, Beit Sahem, Qudsaya, and Rawdet Al Zabadani.
- Dispatched-through its operational partners in Damascus and Rural Damascus- life-saving assistance to 963,501 vulnerable individuals.
- Followed a successful approach whereby core relief items have been used as an entry point for protection oriented projects in Al Qalamoun District, Qara and Yabroud in Rural Damascus.
- Worked closely with implementing partners on the ground in order to mitigate the impact of the winter season by dispatching winterized items for 108,925 individuals in Damascus and Rural Damascus.

COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVE IN RURAL DAMASCUS RESULTS IN 280 CHILDREN ATTENDING SCHOOL

In the Al Jib Al Ahmar area in Sahnaya, Rural Damascus, there is a large population of IDP women headed households who are living in unfinished buildings there lacking many basic services. One of the other issues facing the families there was education for their children with many families unable to afford the cost of a school uniform. However, in a great show of community spirit a group of IDP women and men with sewing skills came together and volunteered to make the uniforms. With the support of a UNHCR-funded community-based initiative they received material, sewing kits and tools which they then used to complete the uniforms.

This initiative initially started with the aim to support 100 IDP children, but then expanded to cover another 180, reaching a total of 280 children. IDPs who participated in the initiative showed passion and even spent extra hours to finalize the CBI on time for school. The CBI also encouraged other IDP women with limited sewing skills to participate in tasks such as fastening uniform buttons and distributing the uniforms. This CBI shows that when a community comes together, with a little help from UNHCR, it can find practical solutions almost anything.



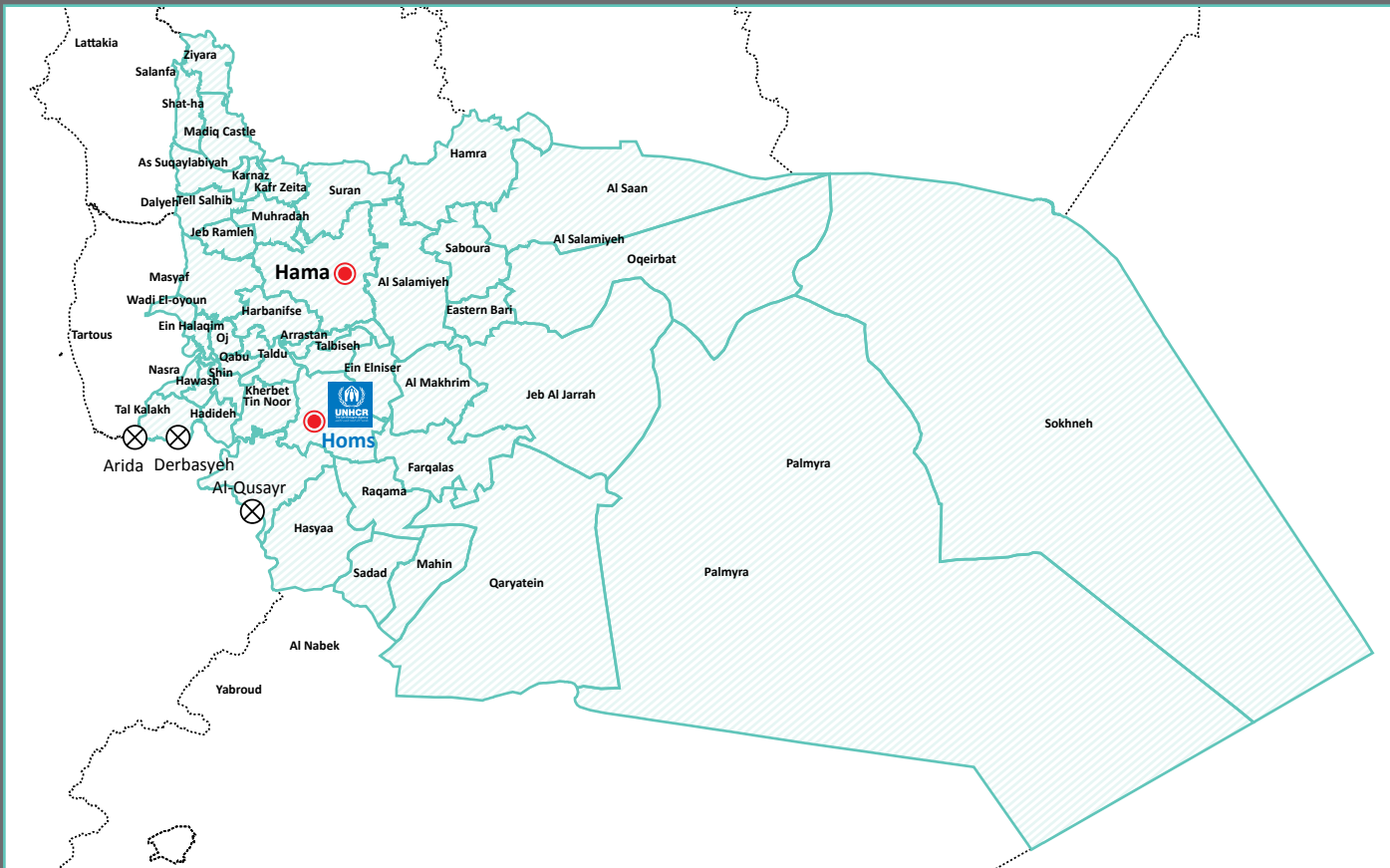
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HOMS

COVERING CENTRAL SYRIA



The security situation in the governorate improved slightly in the second half of the year leading to the expansion of UNHCR activities in the governorate encompassing hard-to-reach areas in rural Homs and Hama. This enabled timely response to multiple displacements in the country due to the escalating military confrontations between the government forces and NSAGs in areas such as Idlib, Jisr Alshogour, Areeha, Palmyra, and Al Quaryaten. As a result in Homs in 2015, UNHCR:

- Conducted needs and protection assessments and provide CRIs to displaced people in rural Homs and areas within Homs such as Al Rabwa, Al Shamas, Al Zarzoria, Hassia, Al Tawzee, Al Jbari, Al Hosn castle, Al Dablan, Al Hwash, Hama city, Tal Kalakh, Bab Al Sibaa, Shin, and Al Arbeen through 41 missions.
- Participated in inter-agency humanitarian missions to the besieged areas of Al Waer, Arrastan, Talbeesa as well as Al Houla.
- Successfully negotiated an agreement on documentation and legal services for the internally displaced population in Homs and Hama with the Syrian government. The agreement supports IDPs in documentation, marital status issues, and registration of birth, marriages, divorces as well as court interventions and legal representation.
- Established four new Community Centers in Homs City and launched their activities. The main services provided were vocational training, counseling, PSS, educational remedial classes, CBIs and training of ORVs.
- Through its implementing partners, assisted 56,467 individuals in having access to healthcare.

TARIK AND MICHAEL: BRINGING LIGHT TO HOMS

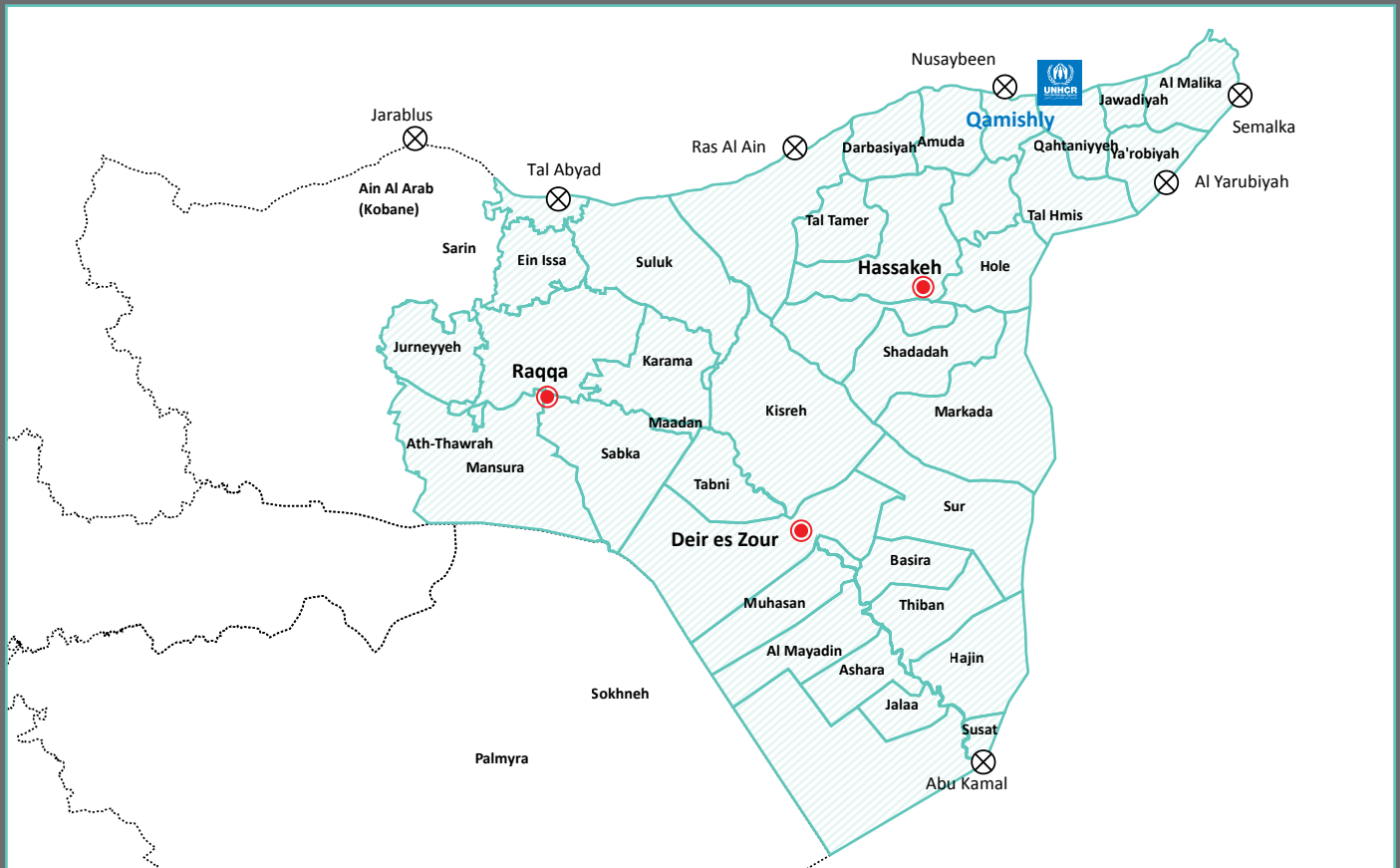
Before the crisis Tarik worked as an accountant and he also had a small wax workshop. Michael worked as an engineer and had a clothing factory. Both men are from the old city in Homs. As a result of the conflict they both lost everything, including their jobs and businesses and were displaced to the Fairuza area in Eastern Homs. While there Tarik heard about the various UNHCR supported vocational training courses run by its partner GOPA. He initially enrolled in a course on the production of cleaning products moving on to training on project management.

After completing these courses he decided to put his past experience in his wax workshop coupled with his vocational training in project management to good use and start a candle making business with Michael. Through GOPA they applied and were successful in obtaining a UNHCR-funded small business loan and established their very successful candle making business which is now supplying many of the cafes and restaurants in Homs city. They thanked UNHCR and GOPA for their assistance as the business is now supporting two families as well as spreading a little light throughout Homs.



QAMISHLY

COVERING THE NORTH EAST



The Hassakeh Governorate still suffers from insecurity and access challenges due to the armed conflict. The ISIS advance in the southern area of Hassakeh city increased the rate of displacement of families throughout the year. UNHCR also received information about a possible attack on its premises in Qamishly in October which led to all staff working from home for a period of time until a security assessment was completed. Despite this:

- Six border operations through the Nusaybeen crossing border were conducted by UNHCR where CRI kits for 100,000 individuals were received in coordination with UNHCR Turkey.
- UNHCR Field Office in Qamishly responded immediately through the identification of IDPs and CRI distribution to the various displacement waves from Hassakeh City, Al Khadour villages, Tel Hamees, Al Hol, Ras Al Ein, Abdul Azeez Mountains, Deir es Zour, Raqqa and East, Southeast and Southwest of Hassakeh in addition to Rabea in Iraq.
- UNHCR assisted 19,863 individuals identified as among the most vulnerable in the governorate with cash.
- An airlift took place from Damascus to Qamishly carrying 4,883 winter clothing kits, four rub halls as well as 2,600 winter sweaters. The items were dispatched to both the UNHCR warehouse in Qamishly and the Newroz refugee camp.
- UNHCR dispatched CRI kits for over 73,000 individuals to nine distribution locations in the Hassakeh governorate including new geographic hard-to-reach areas such as Tal Tamer and Mabrouka in the Ras Al Ein in addition to the Al Hol area which had not been previously reached since 2013.

SOZDAR: HELPING YAZIDI REFUGEES

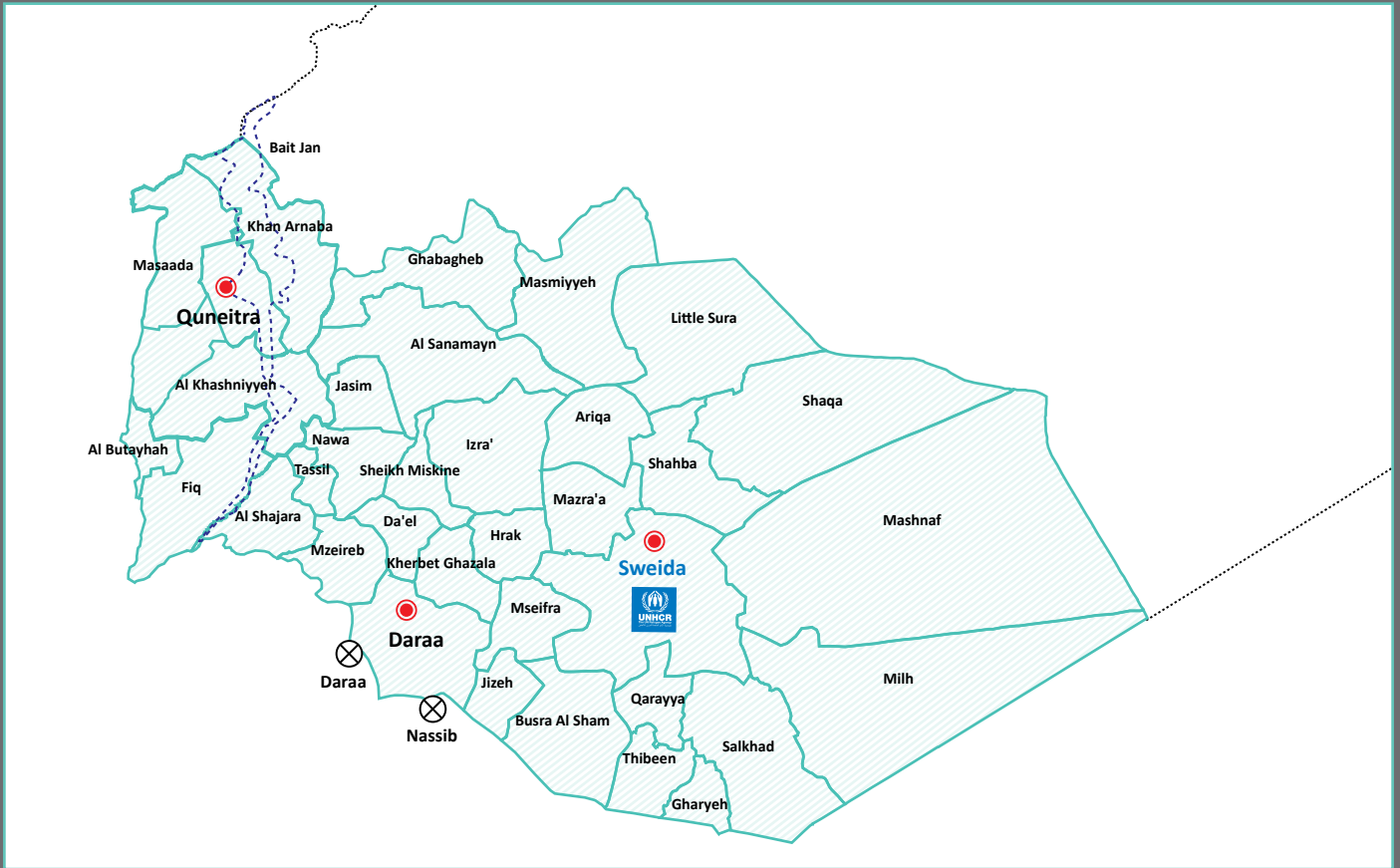
Sozdar is a 22 year old woman who grew up in Malkia in the Hassakeh governorate and is an art teacher. In 2014 when she heard of the plight of the Yazidi population trapped in the Sinjar Mountains in Iraq, under attack from ISIS she volunteered with the Kurdish Red Crescent and went there to help. She saw there many new born babies dying due to lack of milk, elderly people dying of heat exhaustion and exhaustion, shortages of food, water and shelter. She and other volunteers helped many people there some of whom now live in the Newroz refugee camp after making the long journey there. She now teaches art mainly to the Yazidi children in the camp and sees the refugee population there not as a burden on the host community but as a benefit to the area. “As a member of the host community I believe it is our duty to help our brothers and sisters from Sinjar”, she proudly tells us.



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SWEIDA

COVERING SOUTH WESTERN SYRIA



Sweida Field Office covers the southern governorates of Syria; Sweida, Daraa and Quneitra. The security situation deteriorated during the year as non-state armed groups took over Naseeb border crossing between Syria and Jordan leading to its closure which cut off one of the few supply routes for UNHCR to import humanitarian assistance. Despite this:

- UNHCR delivered 274,860 CRIs to people in Sweida, Daraa and Quneitra including over 15,360 beneficiaries living in hard-to-reach areas.
- During the displacement of families from Busra Al Sham, UNHCR responded through the urgent distribution of CRIs for 2,000 beneficiaries.
- A new community center in Quneitra was supported by UNHCR through its implementing partner in the governorate; GOPA.
- UNHCR approved the provision of grants to support three beneficiaries in establishing their small businesses which are a bakery for making and distributing sweets, a mini market and a shop for making cheese and yogurt.
- UNHCR recruited two attorneys to provide legal assistance/counseling to people of concern in the Sweida governorate.

IKBAL – IDP, BAKER, BUSINESSWOMAN

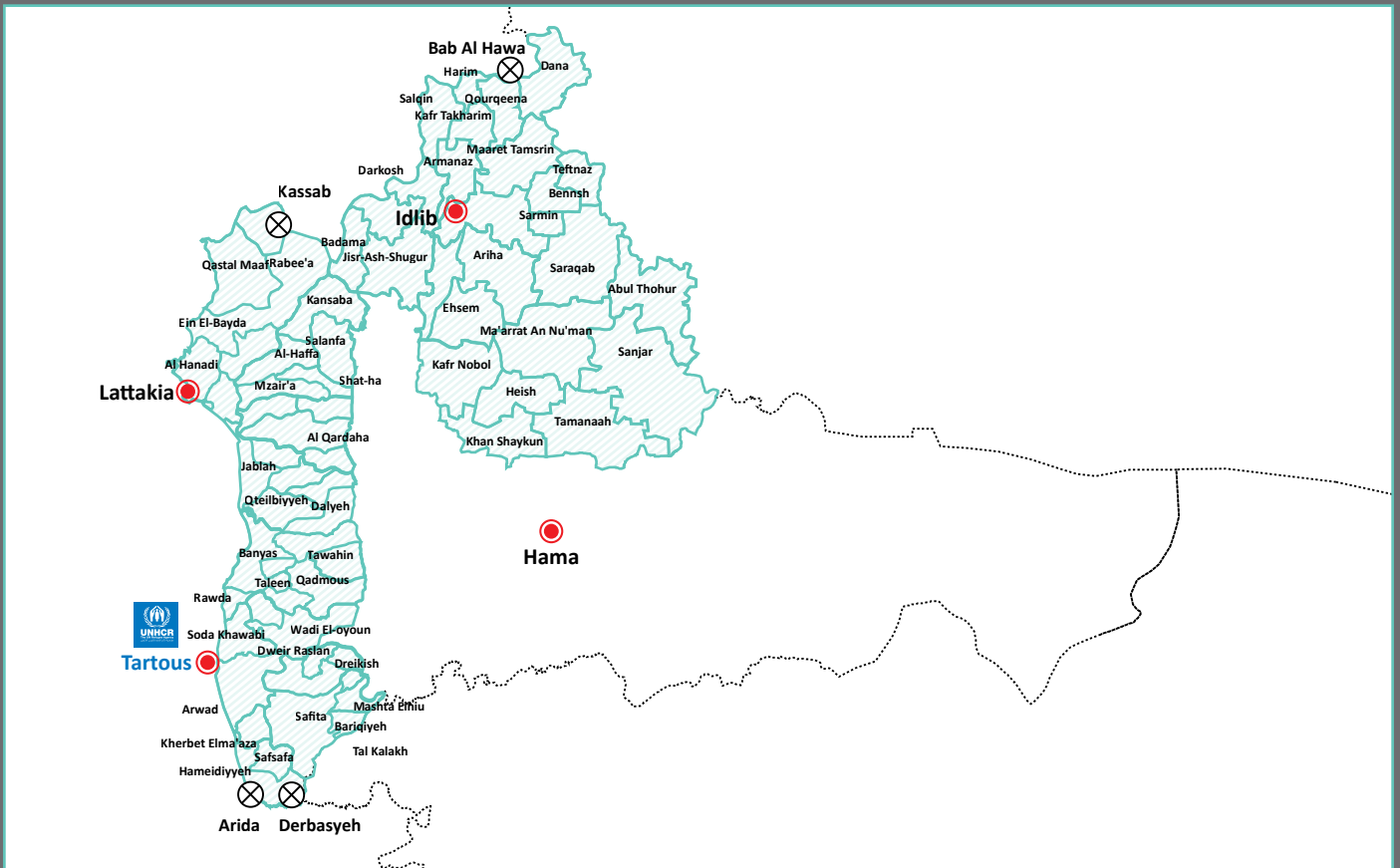
Ikbal was displaced from rural Damascus three years ago and came to Sweida. It was there she heard of the UNHCR-funded small business grant programme and she decided to apply through our partner GOPA for funding to open a small bakery. Despite the fact that she did not finish her education she is a shrewd business woman and now runs a prosperous bakery in Sweida, two years after applying for one of UNHCR small business grants, and completing UNHCR business skills course. She is now able to support her two sons, pay her rent and has even opened a small shop next to her bakery to diversify into other ways of earning a living. During a recent mission to Sweida UNHCR colleagues from Damascus visited her for follow up and fell in love with her famous, delicious thin Syrian bread, so much so that they purchased everything she had in the bakery! (See Below)

Although Ikbal is making the best of life, she hopes for a peaceful resolution to the crisis, and to be able to return to her home in rural Damascus eventually.



TARTOUS

COVERING WESTERN SYRIA



UNHCR's Tartous Field Office covers the Tartous, Lattakia and Idlib Governorates. In 2015 Tartous and Lattakia remained relatively safe with only limited numbers security incidents, and hosts many IDP and refugee families. Idlib however is a hard-to-reach area being under the control of non state armed groups since March. In 2015:

- UNHCR facilitated the flow of core relief items into the country through both Tartous and Lattakia ports and dispatched CRIs to 117,475 IDPs in Tartous, 131,225 IDPs in Lattakia and 37,950 IDPs in Idlib.
- Ten shelters hosting 8,730 IDPs were rehabilitated/ upgraded in Tartous as well as shelters hosting 5,476 IDPs in Lattakia. The rehabilitation included partitions, WASH, electrical works, doors and windows, as well as improvements for accessibility.
- UNHCR supported the establishment of two community centers and one child-friendly space in Tartous as well as one community center in Lattakia providing a variety of services benefiting over 20,000 individuals.
- During the large-scale displacement from Idlib, 2,000 family tents for 10,000 individuals were dispatched to UNHCR Partner SARC. UNHCR also led the Protection emergency response with all involved NGOs and UN agencies for the displacement from Ariha and the coastal areas and strengthened the partner's response capacity.
- UNHCR in Tartous by participating in 11 inter-agency convoys delivered assistance to hard-to-reach areas in Idlib benefiting 44,725 individuals.
- UNHCR donated a speech laboratory as well as audiology equipment to the Aamal NGO in order to support refugee and IDP children in their audiology center, speech lab centers and various hearing scan centers in rural Lattakia and Tartous. More than 100 children on a monthly basis are benefiting from the UNHCR assistance.

UNHCR COMMUNITY BASED INITIATIVE (CBI) HELPS IN THE EDUCATION OF DROPOUT CHILDREN IN LATTAKIA

Volunteers in the UNHCR- supported community center in Lattakia have come up with a unique and effective way of educating children, many who have previously dropped out of school because of displacement. The idea of using a simple comic book as an educational tool was conceptualized by the Education Support Team in the center and they successfully applied for funding through a UNHCR CBI to develop this initiative further. Volunteers then developed the comic, doing everything from the artwork to the dialogue. This pilot project is used for Arabic classes and tells a story reinforcing the importance of grammar. The story begins with Samer being asked to write a small essay by his teacher, he goes to the library where he finds the dictionary there crying. He asks what is wrong and the dictionary says it is sad because all the letters are fighting inside because they disagree about grammar. Samer then goes on adventures and helps the letters make peace so the dictionary is happy again and he can write his essay using proper grammar. This UNHCR CBI has been so successful that further support has been given and new comics dealing with English and Mathematics are being developed for 2016.

The center which is supported by UNHCR and run by its implementing partner, the Syria Trust was officially opened by the UNHCR Representative in December. It is located in the Suleiba area of Lattakia city and started functioning earlier in September despite not being completely finished. Since then it has provided support to the psychosocial well-being for both the IDP and host communities and promoting their participation in such things as vocational training and remedial classes. So far the community center has benefited over 1,000 individuals and been providing many services for the affected population including psychosocial support, vocational training, educational support, community-based initiatives support, social services as well as various other activities based on the needs of the community.



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CAPACITY BUILDING FOR UNHCR AND PARTNERS

Many affected people in Syria are not aware of their rights and often do not receive the necessary protection support for many reasons, including the inadequate capacity of stakeholders in fulfilling their protection duties for various reasons including the lack of expertise, inadequate planning and preparedness. In addition with over four million people now having left Syria due to the conflict the brain drain of qualified people is huge. UNHCR Syria therefore believes that capacity building is an integral part of its humanitarian response because during displacement, existing traditional support mechanisms within a community, such as families, friends, neighbors or other social networks often breakdown, leading to internally displaced persons being exposed to greater protection risks during conflict.

In order to ensure partners provide appropriate protection services to affected communities, UNHCR invests in the capacity building of protection service providers in Syria to provide proper assistance to vulnerable people especially those affected by displacement. UNHCR capacity building promotes Protection mainstreaming mainly in the field of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Legal Awareness, Child Protection, Community Mobilization, Psychosocial Support (PSS), Code of Conduct as well as professional skills needed by humanitarian workers which would improve standards of work provided in the field.



During 2015, UNHCR developed an enhanced capacity building plan for UNHCR staff, partners, outreach volunteers, grassroots organizations and community leaders. A package of training on “Protection Induction” was developed to include the topics on the UNHCR Code of Conduct, UNHCR Mandate, Community Mobilization Programmes, vulnerability identification, Legal Aid Programmes, Communication Skills and Psychological First Aid training as well as advanced training on Child Protection and Training of Trainers on SGBV and life skills. During 2015, fifteen training sessions and workshops were conducted throughout Syria addressing more than 375 Protection responders such as national authorities, humanitarian agencies, local and international NGOs, humanitarian workers and outreach volunteers.

In addition, training for staff and partners was also organized by UNHCR in the areas of Reporting, Information Management, Photography and Public Information and Communications in Damascus, Qamishly, Homs and Tartous as part of a series of training courses which will continue throughout 2016.

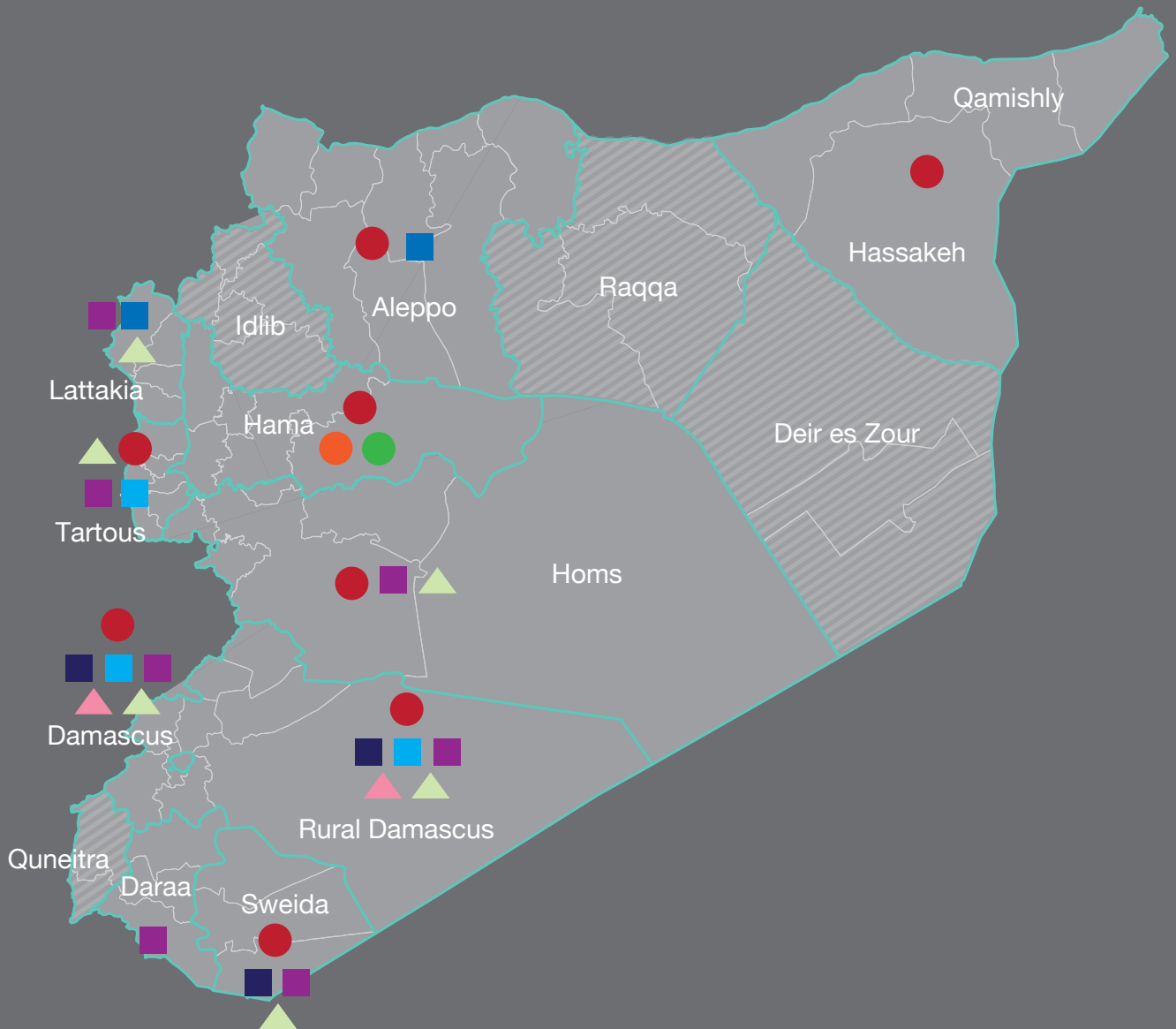


©UNHCR /B.Diab 2015

LARGESCALE PROTECTION LEARNING PROGRAMME (PLP) FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SYRIA

In 2015, 77 national staff members from all five field offices in Sweida, Homs, Qamishly, Tartous and Aleppo as well as UNHCR Branch Office Damascus enrolled in the Protection Learning Programme which is a six-month training course, a five-day workshop, followed by a three month project in the area of Protection by each participant which are then independently evaluated by the Global Learning Center (GLC) at UNHCR HQs Budapest. The aim of this course is to build the capacity of all staff to enable them to implement their acquired protection skills at all levels of service delivery in the Syria operation. The PLP is the highest level of Protection training in UNHCR and this is the first time worldwide that the training of such a large number of national staff takes place in a year in a single country and operation.

37,450 BENEFICIARIES HAVE ACCESS TO CAPACITY BUILDING



Capacity Building

- Capacity Building
- Community Mobilization & Support
- General PSS Activities

Socio-economic Activities

- ▲ Home-Based Production
- ▲ Start up Small Business Grant (SSB)

Community-Based Participation and Assistance

- Assessment
- Community-Based Initiatives grants
- Outreach Volunteers Programmes
- Support to Local Organization Grants

REFUSING TO GIVE UP: THE RESILIENCE OF SYRIAN IDPs

“ We do not even know how strong we are until we are forced to bring that hidden strength forward. In times of tragedy, of war, of necessity, people do amazing things. The human capacity for survival and renewal is awesome. ”

Isabel Allende

As the conflict in Syria is in its fifth year, it is easy to forget that despite the tragic circumstances that have befallen displaced people there are many IDPs who refuse to let life get them down, pick themselves up and in many cases start all over again using their strength, intelligence and skills to educate themselves, upskill or even in some cases open businesses. In this section the resilience of these amazing people is highlighted.

MOHAMMED: DISPLACED FROM ALEPPO TO TARTOUS BUT STILL OPTIMISTIC

Mohammed Amin Ahmad was displaced from the Karm A Nahhas Neighborhood in Aleppo city due to the conflict and fearing for the lives of his wife and ten children he sent them to Tartous in 2013 and later joined them in the Al Karnak IDP camp. Mohammad described exiting the neighborhood under the cover of night “like a smuggler” so as not to be caught by the armed groups there. However, despite all this Mohammed continues to be optimistic and has even opened a small business repairing household appliances which has proven to be a great help to both inhabitants of the camp and other people from the area. He was very grateful for the assistance provided by UNHCR such as the family tent and its CRI kit as well as the recreational and PSS activities organized by UNHCR’s partners that his younger children usually participate in.



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ABU BASHAR: FROM BUSINESSMAN TO A DISPLACED PERSON ... AND BACK TO BUSINESSMAN AGAIN



©UNHCR /D.Mc Sweeney 2015

Mohamed Naeem Agha (Abu Bashar) 57, had lost a son and a son-in-law in the Syrian crisis, before he came to Lattakia from Aleppo some four years ago. He and his family reside at the sports city shelter there, by far the largest urban shelter in Syria hosting over 5,500 people mainly from Aleppo, but also from Idlib, Hama and Raqqa.

Before the crisis Mohamed was an affluent businessman dealing in import and export of various commodities. Because of the conflict he lost everything and was displaced. However his business skills could not be kept in check for long, and as soon as he reached the Lattakia shelter, he saw a need for a small supermarket at the shelter. Now he runs a successful business with the help of his two sons and son-in-law.

“Many of the people here cannot afford everything they want to buy, so I often give them a little reduction, as I know their conditions”, said Mohammed. “It is always blessed to give, and at the end of the day, I make enough money to keep my extended family of 15 people satisfied and well.” When asked about his ambitions and future plans, he said he wants to start to manufacture sweets locally, as it is more expensive to buy the sweets from outside, he wants to make them affordable to the people at the shelter by making them locally. He also hopes that peace will return to Syria and that he and his family will return to Aleppo and perhaps invest in farming as he has a small piece of land back there. As he says “There is no place like home”.



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JULIA DOMNA WILL REIGN AGAIN IN HOMS



Julia Domna was one of the most powerful people in the Roman Empire during the period from A.D. 193 to 217. She was from a Syrian family of the city of Emesa, modern day Homs. While her emperor husband, Septimius Severus, was fighting rivals, pursuing rebels, and subduing revolts in the far corners of the empire, Julia Domna was left to administer the vast Roman Empire. She proved to be an able administrator. She was also a patron of the arts and invited the most brilliant philosophers, writers, and other artists in the Roman world to grace her court and keep learning and culture alive.

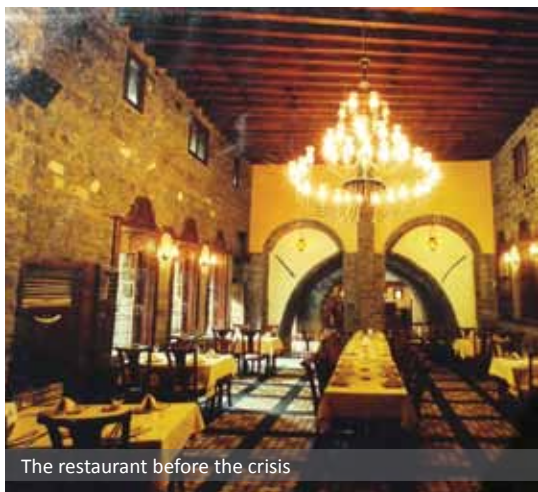
For many years, the Julia Domna Restaurant in Homs was also a beacon of culture, synonymous with the old city there. A busy four star restaurant with seating for 1,500 people, it was one of the first buildings taken over by NSAGs and occupied for over two years, during which it was badly damaged, with many parts completely destroyed. However, with the peace agreement for the old city and the eventual stabilization of the area, owner Malek Trabolsi has returned and has taken on the enormous task of rebuilding his restaurant.

As he says “Julia Domna is my life’s work and I am determined to reopen. I am optimistic that people will continue to return and the reopening of the restaurant will have a knock on effect drawing even more people back to the old city. Schools, homes churches and mosques are all being rebuilt but a community needs other things also

such as history, culture and services such as restaurants ... Julia Domna has all these attributes’ he proudly adds, to the background noise of hammering and drilling.”

Malek is planning to reopen the ground level part of the restaurant in the summer of 2016 and we are all on standby to go and check it out!

UNHCR and its partners continue to support people who return to the old city with not only core relief items and shelter solutions such as sealing off kits but also practical protection and community services support such as vocational training and small business start-up grants.



The restaurant before the crisis



The restaurant currently under reconstruction



Install the door



The restaurant currently under reconstruction

SECTOR
APPROACH



UNHCR IS THE LEAD OF THREE SECTORS IN SYRIA:
THE PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, THE SHELTER AND THE
NON-FOOD ITEM SECTORS. IT IS ALSO AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE HEALTH
AND EDUCATION SECTORS. UNHCR, AS SECTOR LEAD, HAS CONTRIBUTED
SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE 2016 HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OVERVIEW AND THE
HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN.

PROTECTION SECTOR

The Protection and Community Services Sector led by UNHCR comprises 19 partners including NGOs and sister organizations such as UNICEF, UNFPA, UNRWA, SARC, DRC, IOM, and IMC. The Sector has two Sub-Sectors on Child Protection, and GBV, respectively led by UNICEF and UNFPA.

The Sector defines Protection as “all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. HR Law, IHL, Refugee Law)” based on the concept endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The work of the sector is guided by the principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence, and the humanitarian principle of ‘Do no harm’. It supports the affected population, including IDPs and the host community, in addition to reducing the adverse effects of displacement through a diverse range of protection and community services responses. These include social, legal and psychosocial counseling, recreational, educational and vocational activities provided in collective shelters and community centers as well as material and non-material assistance for persons with specific needs. The Sector has worked towards increasing the capacity of its members to monitor/assess the needs of the affected population and use the available information to inform the protection strategy, advocacy and provide protection services in collaboration with partners.

As Sector lead, UNHCR led the drafting of the Humanitarian Country Team Protection Strategy, on the basis of which subsequently the Whole of Syria Humanitarian Protection Strategy was prepared. The Protection and Community Services Sector has continued to provide advice to the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Humanitarian Country Team on relevant protection matters throughout the year.

The Sector members have defined a Plan of Action, rooted in the 2015 SRP, which has also informed the 2016 HRP, that focuses on four key areas to respond to existing challenges: compilation of relevant legal dispositions as they relate to IDP Guiding Principles, to identify areas of convergence and foster dialogue on legal matters for the protection of the persons affected by the crisis; mapping of existing services by Sector members, the review of existing pathways to increase safe access, and of cross-referral mechanisms with State services; support to local authorities to provide protection responses in cases of sudden displacement, particularly in areas where Sector members do not have a permanent presence; and mainstreaming of protection across the humanitarian response and support Protection and Community Services coordination mechanisms at sub-national level.

In 2015, more than 3,101,469 individuals benefited from the Protection response provided by the Sector.



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SHELTER AND NFI SECTOR

NON- FOOD ITEM (NFI)

UNHCR is the lead agency for the NFI Sector, and co-chairs this Sector with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. Partner agencies of the Sector are UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNRWA, International NGOs such as DRC and PU and National NGOs such as the Syria Trust and GOPA. In 2015, the NFI Sector delivered 11,828,521 items to 3,755,703 people across Syria, including hard-to-reach-areas. During the winter months, the Sector affords extra attention to the roll-out of winterized items. More than 452,317 of these benefited from winterization support which was essential during the cold weather. These winter support kits included high thermal blankets, one extra plastic sheet, winter clothing including woolen sweaters, jackets, underwear, socks, hats, boots, and for infants, a full baby clothing set including a hat.



SHELTER

UNHCR is also the lead of the Shelter Working Group together with MoLA which includes UNRWA, PU, UN Habitat, DRC and IOM. This group works together with MoLA and the General Authority for Palestinian Refugees in Syria to map the needs in the country and provide a comprehensive response to the extent possible.

In 2015, the working group assisted 67,000 individuals through upgrading public and private collective shelters and distributing shelter kits and materials for 35,108 individuals, in addition to supporting the management and maintenance of shelters which accommodate 12,797 Palestinian refugees.

Beside the classical shelter interventions, the Sector during 2015, launched a number of new types of shelter assistance, stressing community empowerment and utilizing its capacity. The Sector is actively promoting pilot projects for owner/tenant based assistance through cash for work programmes and support for access to essential building material. Furthermore, the Sector supports governorates' technical departments for Operation and Maintenance programmes in public collective shelters to be carried out through dedicated units in collaboration with IDP communities. The protraction and complexity of the crisis in Syria require further efforts to develop emergency shelter interventions into a more sustainable resilience oriented response. The Sector therefore has increasingly promoted support to IDPs' self-help based initiatives and will further promote this in 2016.



REFUGEE PROGRAMME

“ More people fled last year than at any other time in our records. Around the world, almost 60 million have been displaced by conflict and persecution. Nearly 20 million of them are refugees, and more than half are children. Their numbers are growing and accelerating, every single day, on every continent. In 2014, an average of 42,500 people became refugees, asylum-seekers or internally displaced persons, every single day – that is four times more than just four years ago ”

Former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres, World Refugee Day 2015



©UNHCR /V. Toumeh 2015

Before the crisis, Syria used to host large numbers of refugees which accounted for 12% of the Syrian population. These numbers have decreased dramatically after the crisis due to the insecurity and the limited resources in the country. After several years of continuously diminishing new asylum requests, 2015 saw a sharp increase in registrations of Iraqis as a result of violence and conflict linked to the territorial take-over by the ISIS and the counter-insurgency launched by the Government of Iraq and its allied forces. In 2013, 1,193 new requests were received with 1,768 in 2014. This increased to 5,403 individuals in 2015.

Refugees have been harshly impacted by the crisis. Refugees residing in contested areas have been displaced internally, resulted in family separation, and exposed children, women heading households, elderly and persons with disabilities to heightened risks. Prior to the conflict, informal economic and social support mechanisms maintained the livelihood of refugees although they had no formal right to employment. Loss of such mechanisms due to the conflict has resulted in refugee families becoming once more fully reliant on humanitarian assistance and support provided by UNHCR. They are exposed to the effects of armed conflict like any Syrian citizens in addition to challenges that they have to face as foreigners. While the government's policy on admission and legal stay remains favorable, the protection environment is compromised by a range of risks, such as tightened security procedures at checkpoints as well as lack of identify documents that are limiting the freedom of movement, access to assistance and public services and exposure to risks of harassment and exploitation. To respond, UNHCR has undertaken a number of programmes from legal aid, cash grants to livelihood support.

At the end of 2015 the number of asylum seekers and refugees currently registered in the country was 26,648.

01 RECEPTION AND REGISTRATION

The first point of access for assistance from UNHCR is through reception and registration facilities which are available at the UNHCR premises in Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Qamishly, Tartous and Sweida. During 2015, 5,333 new individuals have been registered.

02 STATUS DETERMINATION

UNHCR conducts status determination if people seeking protection meet the definition of the refugees in accordance with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of the Refugees. Since the beginning of 2015, UNHCR finalized individual refugee status determination in respect of 2,326 individuals. The total is composed of 1,247 recognitions (54%) and 1,079 rejections (46%).

03 ASSISTANCE

<p>Livelihood Training A total of 18 individuals benefited from livelihood programmes for refugee women and men to start up a small business.</p>	<p>Legal Assistance UNHCR provides legal assistance in areas of documentation, residency and other issues, as well as detention and deportation. In 2015, 2,160 refugees and asylum seekers received legal aid including counseling, awareness raising and interventions before courts and administrative bodies.</p>	<p>Health Services During the year, 25,148 refugees benefited from UNHCR-supported free health services including primary health care, emergency life-saving, secondary and tertiary health care.</p>	<p>Awareness Raising Awareness raising sessions on several subjects including PSS, health and SGBV have been organized for the benefit of 1,810 refugees.</p>
<p>Cash Assistance During the year, 31,402 refugees have received cash for food and 16,060 who are the most vulnerable have also received financial assistance. Moreover, 5,856 refugee children benefited from UNHCR education grants. UNHCR also supported 96 university students in the academic year 2014 -2015.</p>	<p>Protection for survivors of SGBV 102 survivors of SGBV were supported by UNHCR.</p>	<p>Educational Assistance 700 individuals benefited from remedial classes for primary education.</p>	<p>Vocational Training 3,263 participated in vocational training aiming at fostering the skills.</p>

04 DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Refugees have limited possibilities for durable solutions in Syria. Local integration in Syria is not an option while many have no prospect for repatriation to their countries as there are not yet conditions for them to return to homes. Resettlement is the only vital option. 1,485 individuals vulnerable refugees were successfully resettled during the year in countries like Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, USA and Finland. Priority was given to people with medical needs, women at risk, unaccompanied minors and people with legal and physical protection concerns.



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UNHCR SYRIA INTRODUCES CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY TO ASSIST REFUGEES

In April 2015, UNHCR Syria upgraded its registration services by introducing biometrics and issuing secured laminated ID cards. The new biometric system verifies the identity of the persons of concern to UNHCR with an Iris scan, a feature that is completely unique to the individual and stays unchanged for lifetime. Then it records the collected data on special secured application providing a high level of protection and credibility for the registration system. The new system will eliminate problems caused by lost Identity Cards and prevents unauthorized use of lost, stolen or abuse of someone else's ID cards. Since the introduction of biometrics in April, 18,857 new secure ID cards have been issued and 12,453 individuals enrolled in the system.



ROJ CAMP IN HASSAKEH

Roj camp was opened in January 2015 to accommodate Iraqis, most of Arab origin, displaced from Ninewa province. Today, some 1,300 individuals reside in the camp. UNHCR provided them with CIR kits, heaters and tents.

YAZIDIS IN NEWROZ CAMP, HASSAKEH



ISIS's attack in the Ninwa district of Iraq in August 2014 led to a massive influx of Yazidis from Iraq into Syria, as over thousands of people fled their homes into the remote Sinjar Mountains in Iraq. Over the next few days an estimated 95,000 people entered Syria. Most seem to have fled with little more than the clothes that they were wearing and many even without shoes. Some of them traveled 150 km to reach the Semalka border crossing. A large majority of the Iraqi families were women and children who arrived in very poor condition, exhausted, dehydrated, and hungry, many with untreated wounds.

Whilst the majority of these people crossed back into the Kurdistan region of Iraq within days or weeks, approximately 3,000 have remained in the Newroz camp in Hassakeh. Since then UNHCR has been providing protection and assistance such as standard CIR kits, heaters, rechargeable fans, tents and wheelchairs to the population. In addition, UNHCR has also provided medicine to residents through local NGOs.

In August 2015, as a response to the extremely hot weather which exceeded 48 degrees, and requests from both refugee committees and camp management, UNHCR distributed desert air conditioner units. The much needed units, which brought great relief from the scorching sun and unbearable heat were immensely welcomed by everyone including the camp residents, committee leaders and camp management. When given one of the air conditioners, 90 year old base was very excited saying 'Due to the suffocating heat I was spending hardly no time in the tent, even sleeping outside, but thanks to UNHCR's assistance I can now stay inside. Thank you UNHCR!'

SHADIA – MOTHER, REFUGEE AND BUSINESSWOMAN

Shadia is a Sudanese refugee and was trying to make a living in Damascus selling Sudanese products such as Henneh, Okra soup powder, chillies, and skin care cream. However she was finding life difficult because she lacked certain skills such as marketing and budgeting. When she heard about a UNHCR-supported livelihood skills course with Al Nada she immediately enrolled. The course helped Shadia organize her finances, market her goods and compete effectively against other traders.

Shadia, who can now offer a better life and more opportunities to her four children is now happy with her small business and very grateful for UNHCR's support. As she says *“because of this training not only do I market my products, I also now market UNHCR and its partner's livelihood courses too”*.



©UNHCR /A.Nasser 2015

FUTURE OUTLOOK

UNHCR Syria's strategy for 2016 comprises a number of key elements which includes:

REACH

In 2016, UNHCR will continue to consolidate its presence, already enhanced in 2015, through its six Field Offices in the country, the deployment of staff and the increased number of partnerships with national and international organizations.



©UNHCR /Z.Mreyoud 2015

PROTECTION

A key element of UNHCR Syria's operational protection strategy consists of linking services for refugees with those for IDPs, (e.g. in community centers), which will allow for better access and monitoring by UNHCR staff as well as promote community-based response for both populations. Reaching out to the population of concern and community participation, though challenging, will remain a strategic priority through:

- Maintaining a network of 15 community centers in 10 governorates to serve both refugee and IDP populations providing integrated provision of assistance and counseling.
- Expanding its outreach and the role of community Outreach Volunteers (OVs) in supporting community protection systems by ensuring the establishment of fully functioning "community ad hoc committees". These committees will focus on issues such as SGBV, child protection, and people with living disabilities, elderly and will also play a key role in supporting the referral system with basic identification and reporting of cases.

Enhancing protection and humanitarian principles through training will remain a strategic objective and UNHCR will promote community based protection mainstreaming across all sectors by incorporating these protection principles in humanitarian assistance. In addition, UNHCR will support government initiatives in the documentation of IDPs to ensure replacement of documentation and other civil registration remedies.

In order to provide protection by presence, UNHCR will multiply field missions to monitor the protection and assistance provided to PoCs. Capacity building and advocacy efforts will be stepped up to support the prevention and response to SGBV and child protection cases as well as to lobby authorities for a more favorable legislative framework. UNHCR will combine cash assistance and the provision of a variety of grants to enhance both household and community resilience as well as continuing to work closely with other UN agencies, national and international partners and the government of Syria to ensure that protection is properly prioritized.



©UNHCR /F.Alkhateeb 2015

CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRIs)

The provision of CRIs will continue to be a major component of UNHCR's IDP response in Syria with delivery made both from inside Syria as well as from the neighboring countries of Turkey and Jordan which allows UNHCR to expand its CRI outreach. UNHCR's distribution takes place based on needs which are identified by over 70 local partners.

The NFI Working Group, which UNHCR leads, have agreed on a minimum standard package, which UNHCR will complement with supplementary items including Hygiene Kits as well as seasonal items such as winter clothes and rechargeable fans depending on the needs assessment. In addition, UNHCR will ensure that coordination and communication amongst all stakeholders will be strengthened, including beneficiaries, local communities, national and international NGOs, in line with the Whole of Syria approach in order to reach the set target of 3.45 million beneficiaries in 2016.

UNHCR foresees the rehabilitation of up to 170 collective shelters, and the upgrade of space in private shelters for more than 65,000 IDPs, the provision of 1,500 transitional structures, and a self-help based cash-for-work and voucher programme for a total of 5,000 families, as well as capacity building exercises for more than 2,000 persons who work in delivering shelter solutions. UNHCR will try to achieve this by:

- Contingency planning, in particular the pre-positioning of tents in areas susceptible displacement and the identification of possible facilities to be made available for temporary IDP hosting.
- The prioritization of self - help driven, cash-for-work, material or voucher assistance programmes in areas where IDPs can return to their original dwellings.
- Focusing on the upgrading of unused or unfinished building projects or large-scale individual complexes, such as Al Ryadah in Aleppo or the Najah/Sahnaya sites in Rural Damascus.
- The use of non-traditional shelters such as transitional earth-bag houses in selected appropriate areas.



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HEALTH

The physical damage of health facilities and the strain on those after being left intact as well as the lack of highly qualified and experienced health staff have seriously affected the availability and the quality of primary health care and emergency services in the country. UNHCR will continue ensuring a free of charge comprehensive package of quality primary health care services for 30,000 refugees and 450,000 IDPs through 17 clinics in seven governorates.

REFUGEES

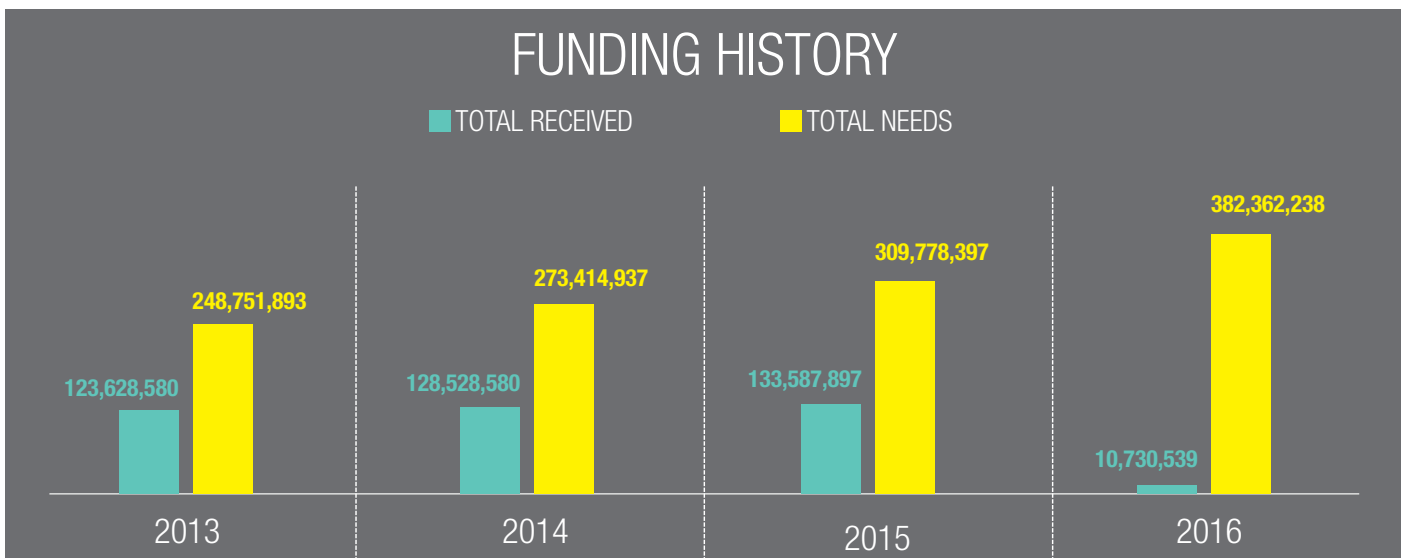
In spite of the current crisis in Syria, UNHCR continues to receive asylum-seekers requesting UNHCR's protection and assistance. In 2016, UNHCR will continue to support refugees and asylum seekers in meeting their basic needs through its cash assistance programme, ensuring an adequate supply of food, support for rents and other domestic needs, access to education for children and additional help for the winter season. In addition, as part of UNHCR's durable solutions, with effective and persistent advocacy, a target of 1,700 refugees will be resettled from Syria.

DONATE TODAY

TO HELP SAVE LIVES AND
PREVENT SUFFERING THROUGHOUT SYRIA



In 2015, UNHCR Syria received a total contribution of \$133,587,897 representing 43% of this year's SRP requirements and leaving a funding gap of 57%. To compare, by the end of 2014 UNHCR had received 47% of its total funding requirements (though the total requirements in 2015 increased by 13%). While the funding flow did not change much in the last two years, a donor pool shows a trend towards diversification, involving 19 donors in 2015, compared to 15 donors in 2014. 2015 donors include 10 governments: the USA, Kuwait, the UK, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, Russian Federation and Luxemburg, two UN funds (ERF & CERF) and seven private donors. The largest part of the funding comes from the government donors, with the top three donors being the USA, Kuwait and the UK. The private sector's support to UNHCR Syria continues to be limited at less than 2% of all contributions received by UNHCR Syria in 2015.



As the chart shows, the needs for UNHCR's Operation in Syria have increased dramatically over the past few years with donor funding failing to keep pace with these large increases as well as failing to even reach 50% of the requirements year on year. The funding requirements for 2016 now stand at \$382 million ... a staggering increase of 73 million USD on 2015's needs which shows the severity of the situation in Syria now.

WITH
13.5 MILLION PEOPLE
 IN SYRIA IN NEED
 OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE
 UNHCR REALLY NEEDS YOUR HELP IN 2016

THANKS TO OUR DONORS



PARTNERS IN 2015

INSIDE SYRIA

 <p>ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF AGENCY</p>	 <p>CHILD CARE SOCIETY</p>
 <p>AL BATOUL CHARITY</p>	 <p>DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL</p>
 <p>AL BIR</p>	 <p>OFFICE OF GOVERNOR OF HASSAKEH IN SYRIA A.R</p>
 <p>AL IHSAN</p>	 <p>GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE & ALL THE EAST</p>
 <p>AL NADA</p>	 <p>INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS</p>
 <p>AL TAALOUF CHARITY ASSOCIATION</p>	 <p>MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION</p>
 <p>AL TAMAYOUZ</p>	 <p>MINISTRY OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION</p>
 <p>AOUN</p>	 <p>NAMAA</p>

PARTNERS IN 2015



PREMIÈRE URGENCE



SYRIAN SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



SYRIAN ARAB RED CRESCENT



THE SYRIA TRUST FOR DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL CARE SOCIETY



THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND



SECOURS ISLAMIQUE FRANCE



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF PROJECT SERVICES

WHOLE OF SYRIA APPROACH



CARE INTERNATIONAL, USA



THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, USA



THE COOPERATIVE HOUSING FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL, USA



THE INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT, USA



GOAL, IRELAND



THE NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

INSIDE SYRIA STORIES, MORE REACH TO GLOBAL AUDIENCE

UNHCR Syria is positioned on the global Media scene covering the largest humanitarian operation in the world since World War II. With press releases and press briefs issued to cover all major events and news stories related to UNHCR Syria, news agencies and media vehicles have picked up UNHCR news feeds highlighting all operations inside Syria, seeking news, interviews, photos and videos. Media engagement has witnessed a large growth on radio, TVs, newspapers and magazines, locally, regionally and globally.

UNHCR Syria portal on unhcr.org is to be launched beginning of 2016 with insights, figures and humanitarian stories, focusing on the protection of the internally displaced inside Syria.

On social media, our verified Facebook page is growing rapidly. It is a global venue where beneficiaries, partner NGOs and people from the host communities are fully engaged approaching us with inquiries, and sharing posts, thus creating a lot of public engagement. It is worth mentioning that UNHCR Syria Facebook page is the 3rd UNHCR page to be verified by Facebook worldwide and the only UNHCR Facebook page that allows people to approach it by direct messaging and queries.

The UNHCR Syria Twitter accounts; UNHCR-Syria, Firas Al-Khateeb, Qusai Alazroni and Vivian Toumeh are widely recognized by Tweeters worldwide, whether it is news agencies, INGOs or supporters from different places around the globe.

We also maintained updated presence on most other Social Media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Tumblr, Storify, Pinterest and Flickr.

UNHCR Syria has been fully fledged to deliver news and human interest stories from within Syria covering UNHCR's interventions to help the 13.5 million internally displaced Syrians in need of humanitarian assistance, as well as supporting over 27,000 refugees from other countries who still reside in Syria. And yet more growth and media engagement is yet to come in 2016.

NEWS STORIES



A SYRIAN YOUNG MAN BRINGS HOPE AFTER DISPLACEMENT TREK

About Alaa, a young Syrian boy who was displaced with his family for more than eight times, which badly affected his education. Alaa together with his displaced colleagues insisted to continue their education and to improve the conditions they are living in and make a change despite the challenges.



SYRIAN SISTERS REPAY A MOTHER'S SELFLESS CARE AND LOVE IN DAMASCUS

Despite displacement and moving from one shelter to another, Amal a single mom from Rural Damascus, managed to provide her children their basic needs. Amal's situation was made even harder by a deteriorating medical condition. She is a diabetic with a heart disorder. Her children rallied and found jobs to raise money for a badly needed heart operation.



GET TO KNOW SHAIMAA: COMPUTER ENGINEER, BOOKWORM, TEACHER

Shaima fled Iraq in 2005 with her mother, father, and younger sister Hadeel, who was 17 at the time. They arrived in Syria with little money and decided to start a new life. Shaima looked for jobs, took a course in web design, and started working as a freelancer building websites. She took up part time jobs and was teaching students sciences and computer skills. She volunteered with UNHCR to help fellow Iraqis and other refugees in Syria.



THOUSANDS FLEE PALMYRA, UNHCR STEPS UP AID

UNHCR and its partners provided humanitarian aid for some 11,000 people who fled the ancient Syrian town of Palmyra and surrounding villages when they were overrun by militant forces on May 2015.




UNHCR DELIVERS AID TO SYRIANS IN EASTERN ALEPPO FOR FIRST TIME IN 2015

On 08 March, UNHCR and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent have been able to deliver urgently needed aid to thousands of people in eastern Aleppo for the first time since October 2014, thanks to a temporary ceasefire.

CAMPAIGNS


<p>WORLD REFUGEE DAY</p> 	<p>WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY</p> 	<p>16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST SGBV: SAFE EDUCATION</p> 	<p>WINTERIZATION CAMPAIGN</p> 
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SOCIAL MEDIA




GLOBAL REACH
8.5 M

- TV
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Radio
- Instagram
- Tumblr
- Others



GROWTH RATE
(124%)

AVG. MONTHLY REACH:
266,700 PEOPLE



OVER **3.5M** PEOPLE REACHED BY UNHCR SYRIA'S ACCOUNTS ON

facebook

twitter

DAILY UPDATES



ANNOUNCEMENTS & ENGAGEMENTS



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FURTHER READING

UNHCR SYRIA ACTIVITIES

UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR), VOICES FROM THE FIELD - UNHCR SYRIA END OF THE YEAR REPORT 2014:
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/54f814604.html>

UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR), FRESH DISPLACEMENT, CHANGING DYNAMICS, UNHCR RESPONDS – UNHCR SYRIA MID-YEAR REPORT 2015
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/55e7f68a4.html>

SYRIA IN FOCUS ISSUE 13 OF 2015
<http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=country&docid=5614bc2d4&skip=0&coi=SYR&querysi=UNHCR%20Syria%20In%20Focus&searchin=title&sort=date>

SYRIA IN FOCUS ISSUE 14 OF 2015
<http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=country&docid=563089b84&skip=0&coi=SYR&querysi=UNHCR%20Syria%20In%20Focus&searchin=title&sort=date>

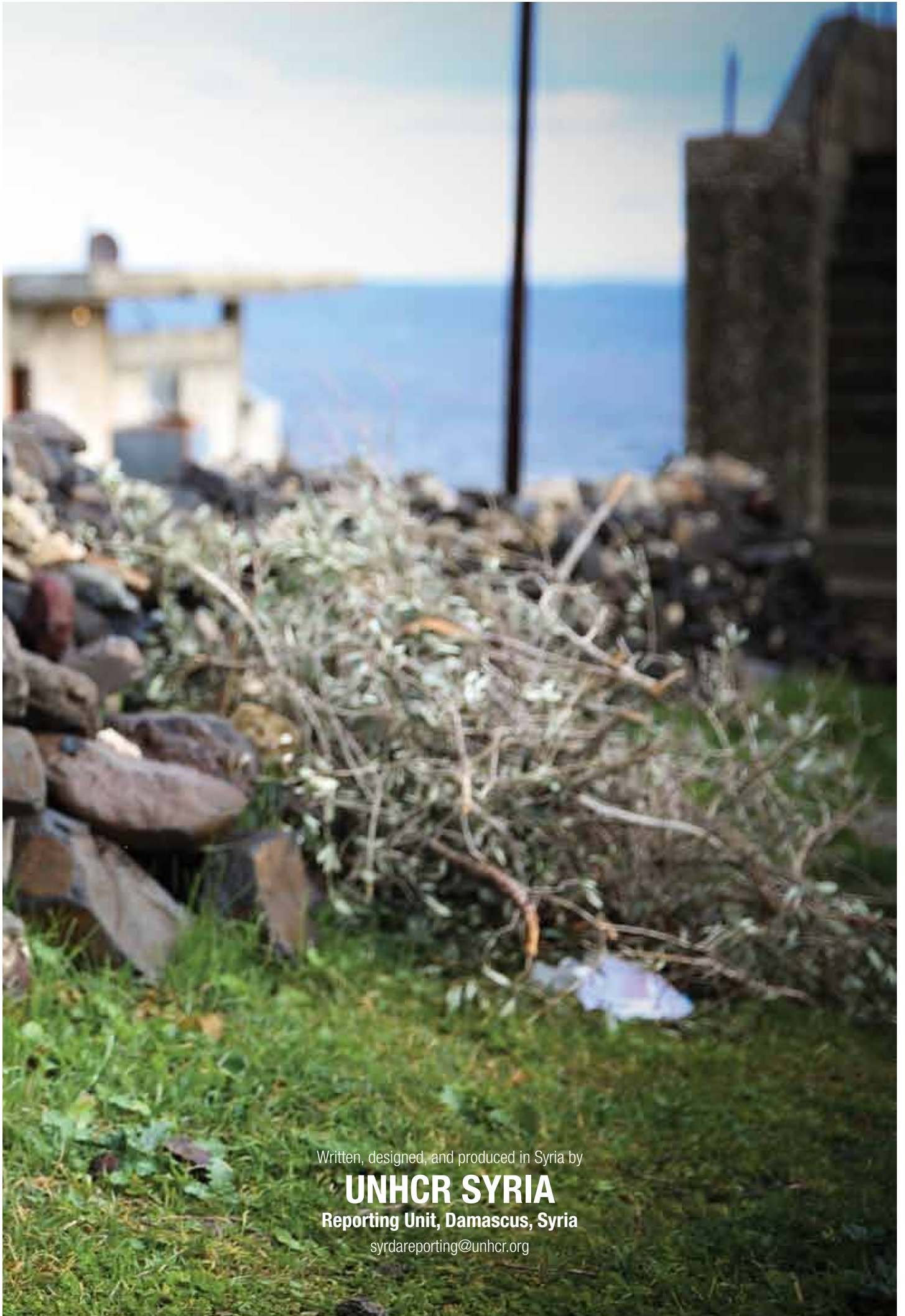
SYRIA IN FOCUS ISSUE 15 OF 2015
<http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=country&docid=564b42bc4&skip=0&coi=SYR&querysi=UNHCR%20Syria%20In%20Focus&searchin=title&sort=date>

SYRIA IN FOCUS ISSUE 16 OF 2015
<http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=country&docid=566532d24&skip=0&coi=SYR&querysi=UNHCR%20Syria%20In%20Focus&searchin=title&sort=date>

2016 SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN (HRP):
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/2016_hrp_syrian_arab_republic.pdf

2016 SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OVERVIEW (HNO):
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/2016_hno_syrian_arab_republic.pdf





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